# HRISTIAN DRAMA

## SPRING 1961

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of Great Britain

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# CHRISTIAN DRAMA

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Cover photograph: Paul Schofield as Thomas More in "A Man for all Seasons"

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All opinions expressed in these pages are personal, and are not necessarily those of the Religious Drama Society of Great Britain.

# EDITORIAL

We cannot fail to be conscious of ever-passing time, for we live not by one calendar but by many. Our lives are regulated not only by the card changed daily on the desk or the page torn monthly from the artistic souvenir that hangs on the wall. The commercial year swings in a double cycle of advertisements from Christmas to the summer holidays and back again. The year of the Church rolls majestically from one Advent season to the next, our reminder that the things of faith are at the same time expectant, dynamic and triumphant. Those who engage in periodical journalism may find themselves working on two time-schemes concurrently. Ideas can no longer be proclaimed in the street as soon as we conceive them. The long process of writing, setting, proofing, printing and distribution keeps our eyes on the distant horizon.

These words are being written shortly after Christmas; but by the time they reach our readers the Passion plays will be in the last stages of rehearsal. Parish groups will be thinking of the long summer rest from productions, and the next plans will be for Summer Schools. Yet no part of the Christian year is without its meaning. The long period from Whitsun to Advent is not a time for piously folding the hands and ceasing effort because the great drama of Redemption has once again been played through. It is with Whitsun that the work of the Church in the world begins.

With these thoughts in mind we are offering our readers some articles which may help in the preparation for next autumn and winter. This is the time when plays must be chosen—and perhaps even written. The need for good Christian plays has never been greater. Perhaps before the next issue of *Christian Drama* one of our readers will have written the play for which we are all waiting.


## WEST RIDING COUNTY COUNCIL
## BRETTON HALL

### TRAINING COLLEGE FOR TEACHERS

A three-year course of initial training for men and women wishing to make their particular contribution to a school through the teaching of Drama will be held at Bretton Hall commencing in September, 1961. Students will be prepared for work in secondary schools and will include in the course as principal studies, English, Drama and Movement Education. They will also be expected to take part in the general training in the Arts provided by the College.

Inquiries should be sent to the Principal, Bretton Hall, West Bretton, Wakefield.

# LONDON THEATRE

FRANCES GLENDENNING

## Saints in the Theatre

Christian sanctity has walked the boards of the West End in the persons of St Antony (*This Way To The Tomb*, Ronald Duncan, Arts Theatre) and Sir Thomas More (*A Man For All Seasons*, Robert Bolt, Globe Theatre).

It was impossible to wait for the curtain to rise at the Arts Theatre without pleasurable and fearful anticipation. The year 1946 saw the first production of this play at the Mercury Theatre and it was much welcomed, discussed, quoted from and read in religious drama circles at the time. How would it appear in 1961?

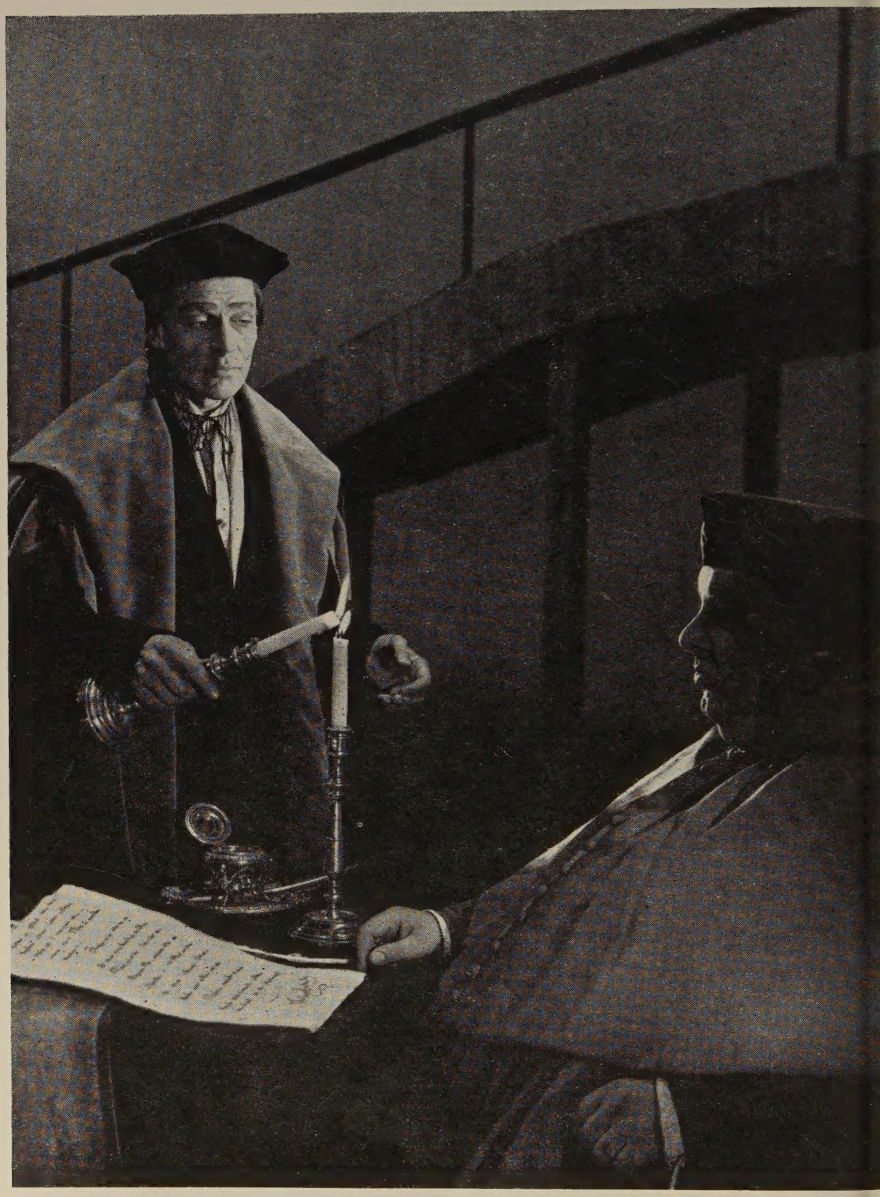
I have often regretted the disappearance of poetry from the stage after its appearance and success in the 1940's but listening to the once familiar rhythms, it seemed as dated as hot jazz now gone cool. Perhaps in the austerity of the 1940's, we took from poetry a satisfaction which we now find in a less restricted way of life. Neither poetry nor the theatre seems the best place for a potted philosophy which seems close to wilful obscurity:

" Desire is the beginning
and the end is sleep;
And in sleep
dreams are,
and in dreams, desire;
This keeps us forever in the wilderness
within the pendulum
Of being and non-being,
walking in each other's sleep
Within God's nightmare.
It is there,
and in this
Our inert franticness
our staid delirium."

In the first half of the play we see Fr Antony living the simple life on the island of Zante, meditating and fasting and succumbing to the temptation of pride and self-sufficiency in his apparent humility. He all but locks the door of the prison that he has made for himself but finally sees what he is doing and throws himself on the mercy of Christ.

The second half of the play is a satirical account of an attempt to test the legend of St Antony's annual return to Zante with the most up-to-date methods. In spite of the addition of some topical allusions, the satire has few sparks, most of which fall safely on to the American way of life.

Philip Locke gives an outstanding performance as Father Opine, a television padre. (He also played Father Evilgrene in John Osborne's *The World of Paul Slickey*.) Iain Cuthbertson pushes along the wordy St Antony who returns as an old man and is eventually recognized by his three former companions now in the persons of the chorus, a postcard seller and Fr Opine. The recognition calls forth some complicated statements about the relation between faith and reason. Dramatic action demands demonstrations not



A SCENE FROM ROBERT BOLT'S *A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS*
THOMAS MORE (PAUL SCOFIELD) TAKES LEAVE OF CARDINAL WOLSEY
(WILLOUGHBY GODDARD).

statements, however cunningly worded, and so the ending is cold and flat apart from the warmth infused by the players and the final lift of the music. Benjamin Britten's music is the most imperishable part of the play and it was finely sung by a choir under the direction of John Lindsay.

It is probably unfair to make too close a comparison between *This Way to the Tomb* and *A Man for All Seasons* because of the fourteen years that divide them. Robert Bolt's play could never have been written in 1946, and to see it makes one realize what growth there has been in the theatre and how dependent writers are on the work of their predecessors, in its rejection or in its development.

*A Man for All Seasons* is a modern miracle play. Miracle plays were originally written about the lives of the saints and mystery plays were based on Holy Scripture. As in *This Way to the Tomb*, we see the process of sanctification in *A Man for All Seasons* but unlike Ronald Duncan (or G. B. Shaw in *Saint Joan*) Robert Bolt ends his play with the death of Sir Thomas More. We are not here concerned with the degree of sanctity attained by More, nor with the acceptability of his canonization. Indeed, the man presented to us by the author is primarily seen as an outstanding puritan, using "puritanism" as recently defined in a literary trial: "an intense sense of responsibility for one's conscience" is its distinguishing feature. More is above all shown as a man with a conscience, but a conscience which causes him to obey rather than to wrestle.

The play shows him in many moods, relaxed and the cause of relaxation in others, loving and admiring of his daughter, tolerant and easy with his quick-tempered wife, kind and challenging to his prospective and narrow-minded son-in-law, wise and witty with King and nobles, clever, skilful and unshakable in argument with friend or enemy. The play progresses chronologically more than psychologically but More himself is a rounded figure and we get glimpses of the exasperating as well as the exquisite character of sanctity as it affects those living as close quarters with it.

*A Man for All Seasons* has been running at the Globe Theatre since July last. What accounts for its popularity? Two factors are primarily responsible, the first is Paul Scofield's performance as Sir Thomas More, the second is the quality of "theatricality" contributed not only by the writing but by the décor, costumes and production. Scofield is the personification of long-suffering and gentleness shot through with intellectual vigour and wit. He gives the impression of always being in control of the situation without the faintest recourse to bullying, intellectual or spiritual. He moves about the stage with grace and ease, equally at home in his Lord Chancellor's robes as in his prisoner's cassock.

"Theatricality" can be a word of abuse as well as of praise but in this context it is used to describe those qualities which are peculiar to the theatre and which therefore give a special pleasure to the audience. John Mortimer, the playwright, once said when discussing the hardships of a theatre audience as compared with cinema or television, that after undergoing the ordeal of booking a seat, arriving on time, struggling to see and hear, etc., a theatre audience deserved something that it could not get anywhere else.

In *A Man for All Seasons* the pleasurable "theatricality" was provided by the Common Man, originally Leo McKern, now George Rose, a beery and

amiable character who takes the audience into his confidence and change his character by changing his head-gear. His inter-scene chit-chat, with a sly swig of wine from a silver tankard prepared for a cardinal, his studied careless handling of priceless tablecloths and manuscripts, his assiduous attention to his personal needs in his various roles, all add up to a delightful sum of nonsense, at its best in a theatre.

Alongside this is a lively, laughable and striking use of props. As the Common Man is rushing the audience through some notable events in one of his commentaries, the mention of Wolsey's death is heralded by the vast and scarlet mass that were his cardinal's robes falling down from the flies. In order that the audience shall not feel that history was grossly unfair in the triumphs gained by the detestable Thomas Cromwell over the beloved Thomas More, a note comes down on a string which the chorus reads to the audience telling them the manner of Cromwell's subsequent downfall and death (and for good measure that of Henry VIII and the Archbishop of Canterbury). To set the trial scene, assorted sizes of royal arms descend and remain suspended throughout the scene.

These details, together with the spacious single set and striking costume (especially the youthful Henry VIII, all white and gold with gingery beard and hair) make the whole production most enjoyable and enlivening to watch.

In a programme note the author writes, " The action of this play ends in 1535 but the play was written in 1960, and if in production one date must obscure the other, it is 1960 which I would wish clearly to occupy the stage." In my opinion this wish is not altogether fulfilled. We are familiar in 1960 with religious and political persecution but the analogy of Sir Thomas More with the silent witnesses at un-american activities trials is very slender. Otherwise we are dependent on the Common Man for our twentieth-century perspective, a not very reliable source. Perhaps we expect too much, but since the publication of *The Leopard*, a novel by Giuseppe di Lampedusa, standards have shot up. The novel is soaked in the Sicily of the 1860's but the reader is always aware that it was written in a post-Freudian, industrialized and atomic age. Robert Bolt never achieves this subtle combination of perspectives.

*A Man for All Seasons* is a miracle play because it is about the life of a saint but it is not a particularly Christian play. Ronald Duncan in *The Way To The Tomb* for all its wordiness is struggling to show forth a Christian way of life and thought. One feels that Robert Bolt might have written an equally good play about any political martyr; the fact that Sir Thomas More was a Christian martyred by other Christians is purely incidental.

Is there a place for the Christian dramatist in the London theatre today? One cannot quarrel with the London audience which clearly prefers Bolt to Duncan. This is 1961 and our ears are no longer tuned to the Eliot orchestra of which Ronald Duncan was a member. London audiences are certainly prepared to stomach serious drama and to be left with question-marks, and they demand a high standard of presentation. What more, in the way of good ground, could a Christian dramatist desire?

**Romeo and Juliet. Old Vic**

" When the Old Vic invited me to produce Romeo and Juliet my first reaction was to refuse . . . " Fortunately Franco Zeffirelli did not refuse

lthough a few sturdy British hearts may have quaked at the prospect of an talian handling the quintessence of all that is English, Shakespeare. Perhaps few gnarled British hands reached for their leather-bound, gilt-edged copies f the sacred writings as if to protect our national heritage from foreign ntervention.

And what was the result? A freshness of approach, astonishing alike in s simplicity and its effectiveness. I should like to take Zeffirelli and cut him ut in little stars and distribute him to all drama groups producing biblical r "religious" plays. His greatest achievement is to allow Shakespeare's ragic heroes and heroines to be real people. He strips them of false grandeur, lants their feet firmly on Veronese soil and thereby creates a new kind of nagic. According to Kenneth Tynan, the *Observer* drama critic, British irectors in the audience were biting their nails, wondering why they had ever thought of it before. This is the advantage of the "outsider" un- rammelled by Shakesperian shibboleths which have such a hold on us that ve are unaware of them. Admittedly Shakespeare-at-school tends to produce soliloquy-conscious audience but Zeffirelli makes everything subservient to is purpose of telling a dramatic story of two young lovers.

He even defies convention, or bows to a different convention, in allowing Romeo to kiss Juliet in the balcony scene. And what a balcony it is, solid nd as big as a double-decker bus. Juliet is not in the position of an angel lancing on the head of a pin, but has room to move and to race in and out f her bedroom with typical teenage vigour. Romeo climbs a convenient ree to gain a toehold on a narrow ledge which runs the length of the balcony bout three feet from the top.

No doubt Shakespeare would admit that the end of the play needs re- vriting but Zeffirelli does his best to make up what is lacking with an almighty mphasis on set and lighting. Juliet wakens in an enormous vault with rough ewn pillars, enthroned on a vast bier pooled in light as cold as the moon. The visual impact is sufficient to silence irreverent thoughts about meddling riars and the distance from Mantua to Verona, at least until long after the low final curtain.

John Stride and Judi Dench played Romeo and Juliet; Franco Zeffirelli, irector, also designed the scenery.

The analogy between Zeffirelli's approach to Shakespeare and a producer's pproach to biblical or religious plays is simply to highlight the necessity or a ruthless discrimination between religion and religiosity, history and entimentality. This has been the cry of the R.D.S. since the day it was born, nat regular church attendance is no qualification for producing plays. I are not suggest that they should advocate "irreligious" producers of religious" plays but the experience of being shown Shakespeare, the drama- st rather than Shakespeare, the English institution, has reminded me of the ecessity for rescuing biblical truth and experience from their prison of ather binding and gilt edges, and for showing the relevance of Christian xperience in the real world outside the domesticity of Church life.

**rials by Logue. Royal Court**

*Trials by Logue* consist of two short plays by Christopher Logue, the first modern version of *Antigone*. I merely want to comment on one detail of

writing and production as it sometimes features in " religious " plays and productions.

I am refering to the device of a direct appeal to the audience. Antigone, in a pause in her brainwashing and persecution, comes downstage and addresses the audience, saying, " Will you help me? " The house lights go up and there we all are, no longer an audience but a collection of individuals, one of whom was acutely embarrassed and longing to shout, " I don't believe in fairies." It was all too much like *Peter Pan* or the pantomime and the return to darkness was as welcome as an addition of hot water when the bath has gone cold.

No doubt there are psychological reasons for hating this appeal from the stage but I make this comment because in time past when involved in acting or producing, I have tended to regard the audience as fair game.

**The Lion in Love. Royal Court**

To an ex-resident of the North West of England the immediate impact of *The Lion in Love* by Sheila Delaney is in the rhythm, intonation and accent of the native language. And with the language goes a way of thought and a way of life vivid and peculiar enough to call at any rate a temporary halt to the fading of all regional differences.

The play revolves around the frictions, fortunes and failures of a family of market traders. Nothing much happens either in a dramatic or in a chronological sense. The son returns home and departs for Australia, the daughter collects a Scottish textile student and considers going to London with him, the weak husband decides for the umpteenth time not to leave his gay, volatile, unreliable, unfaithful, spendthrift wife in favour of a relatively attractive, adoring and married neighbour. A spritely grandfather hops about and scatters the stage with examples of Lancashire wit not all of which would bring honour to their place of origin. Nevertheless he was a useful origin to interpret his daughter's lively species.

Outside the immediate family circle was a lazy ex-acrobat living off the earnings of a reluctant tart. His suggestion that they should rehearse a double act for a Manchester Club revitalizes her and as the market traders crowd on to the front of the stage to cry their wares, the rehearsal begins. But the audience have seen enough of Andy the acrobat (John Rees) to know that Nell (Renny Lister) will soon lose her new-found vitality.

The play is like a badly designed picture which fails to focus and organize the eye of the beholder. Although the husband is the " lion " of the title which refers to one of Aesop's fables, there is little to point the analogy and not enough to make him the top man of the title.

But the good things in the play are real compensation and ex-Northerners can only be grateful that London as well as Coventry had the privilege of seeing this play. The director was Clive Barker.

**Three. Arts and Criterion**

John Mortimer, N. F. Simpson and Harold Pinter continue to sharpen their own peculiar wit and skill in three one-act plays. Emlyn Williams plays the lead in each.

*Three* makes a good evening in the theatre and shows that the middle-aged dramatist is not excluded from the Muse's favours.

SCENE FROM *A VERY COLD NIGHT* BY DENNIS J. WINNIE, PRODUCED AT UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, NEW YORK, IN 1960.

# THE PLAYS THAT WE NEED

PAMELA KEILY

(A talk given at the Writers' Evening held last year)

I must confess to being a little taken aback when it was announced that was expected to address an assembly of authors on the requirements of thos who produce " religious plays ". For though my own experience lies ver much on the " ground floor level "—" in the field ", or whatever the appr priate term *is*—I still would not hesitate to say that first class " theatre " wit a real knowledge of technique, and a basic Christian or religious philosoph underlying it, is the main requirement. Otherwise we need above all dram that can be called the true work of art by the standards of the theatre, and which God is the hero, either implicitly or explicitly! Meaning by that th basic assumption that all life belongs to Him.

And I cannot myself get away from the conviction that perfection of beau in any form of true artistic expression must necessarily be greater praise God than any distortion of artistic truth for the sake of propaganda.

Unfortunately my own particular vocation has made it all too clear that th most desirable " top level " of theatre is seldom practicable on the " low levels " where I have to operate as a producer. One of the biggest difficulti is the fact that very few people *really* mean the same thing when they use th term " religious " drama. The rather loosely-phrased statement printed o the R.D.S. publicity matter is, of course, perfectly all right as far as it goe and very necessary in its breadth of significance if we are going to encompa all ends of this mysterious activity. But since I am in the position of havin to try and express what I am desperately needing from authors in my ow sphere, I fancy I am also in the unfortunate position of having to say what think religious drama is? I *hate* the phrase! Of course it should cover a good plays about life, written by anyone who believes in God. Putting another way, it should include all plays dominated by compassion, and by real generous and loving concern for people, whatever predicament they ma be in.

This, however, is not really the way in which the over-worked parish prie or evangelist looks at religious drama. And it is certainly not the way th many of his parishioners see it. As a " worker in the field " paid by th Church, I myself feel bound to consider their angle. In fact—at the risk being shouted down—I would have thought that the existence of R.D.S. w in order to serve this field. This does *not* mean we want poor plays! Wh does have to be realized is the state of society today, the bewilderment those within the Church, and those outside, the absolutely outworn te minology of traditional religion which means nothing at all to much of t youth or pagan industrial element. In fact it means facing the problem communication.

I am to say " what plays are wanted ". Otherwise what is going vitalize—to give vision of religious truth in the world today? For that certainly my own objective, underneath perpetual and frustrated efforts the North. Four important types of play can be considered:

1. The play that has an immediate contact with the lives of those who take part or those who watch—which rings true in life as they know it.
2. The play that puts biblical truth into terms of the world today.
3. The play of intelligent and imaginative simplicity that lays its main emphasis on pictorial effect and yet maintains a high standard within its limitations.
4. Poetic experiment in terms " understanded by the people ", for the poet has the chance of conveying the all-important fact of supernatural values.

I think I may manage to make myself a bit clearer by illustrating what I mean from the personal experience as a producer of stepping away from the professional theatre, while continually trying not entirely to forget professional standards, and continually trying to subdue the pride that resents the description " amateur "! It eases one's pride, however, to find *The Times* reporting recently on Michel St Denis' statement that " theatrically speaking, we stand between an intellectual élite and a mass audience in process of formation ".

1. It was by taking the step of going into the industrial North that one could see the immensity of the gulf in society. As an author I would say it was likewise by taking that step (even momentarily) that Mrs Baxter wrote the one play which has proved of use " on the shop floor ". She despises what she wrote *now*—but the fact remains that through learning the language and meeting the men of that world she did succeed in creating a piece that I could produce for the steel works and which could hold its audience. I do not suggest that any sensitive writer should spend more than a limited time in such an environment! Only that entering the world I am talking about can prove an eye-opener to very many people who have only moved in more civilized and cultured spheres. They may be surprised to find how readily they are received.

I find increasingly that, in the struggle of far more intelligent people than myself within the Church to penetrate into the vast areas of pagan England, it is the indirect approach that is frequently advocated. This means that to present a moment of real life in dramatic form, even in the crudest circumstances, can stand the chance of opening someone's eyes to a truer vision—just as it does in the real theatre. And again—since I am speaking personally—I consider that is all one should expect to do with a play. The rest is not in our hands! I question whether the ardent evangelist is not hoping to effect immediate conversions in presenting a play and whether he is putting off the real author by this fact.

While mentioning actual experiments in this particular tough world I am talking about, I must also refer to Mr Brabazon's achievement with *The Trial of Jimmy Brown*. This industrialized version of *Everyman* has quite definitely shown up the difference between the present-day approach and the traditional approach. In fact in the North it is proving a major frustration to discover how quickly industrial parishes have seized on this script with success, and are now foiled over further efforts, because nothing exists which they can do with the same effect. It is to my mind, though I know certain theologians disagree, a most blessed combination of entertainment and unforced religion! So much for the industrial end of things.

2. The need for the play that puts biblical truth into present-day terms. I will do no more than refer to the musical version of *Jeremiah* which we recently had written in the North, as an illustration of what I mean. As far as I know, this script is perfectly sound from the biblical standpoint. It has the definite intention of being in the present pattern of theatrical expression, with guitars and pop songs and all that—even if it is limited to the sphere of youth club performance and does not bear criticism as " theatre ".

3. The need for the play of imaginative and intelligent simplicity. Here I would put in a plea for that form of creative effort that gives the inarticulate a chance. Here one can sometimes find an expression of convictions with an integrity that proves salutary to the erudite. I do *not* mean the mawkish and sentimental—for reality is still required. But since the thing I am talking about is frequently in mime form, depending largely on pictorial effect, I fancy it hardly concerns the present question. I would simply say that there are places where only this form can be adequately presented; and also that when well done, both real beauty and real religion can be revealed with sometimes startling impact.

4. The need for poetic experiment—which should again be governed by some degree of relation with life as led by the majority of the population today. (I insert the description simply because the social background of *The Cocktail Party* or *The Elder Statesman* cannot be presented by the level of society which I myself am describing—whereas *Murder in the Cathedral* can, on account of its ecclesiastical background. I would be the first person to say that we want the whole lot if possible!)

Speaking for my own field, we owe a great deal to the stylized chorus play, which is now so often termed " out of date " but which continues to be supremely useful for church backgrounds. It is still more useful with the hesitant and self-conscious actor because it " involves involvement " in a group. (Incidentally, I cannot feel it is *so* out of date when I think how new it appeared to be in America when I used it there in 1958.) However, quite apart from chorus work, another experience with poetic form in the North has been the recent effort with Norman Nicholson. He was commissioned by my committee to write a play that Fabers have published called *Birth by Drowning.* Having now produced it once in open air conditions, once in relatively good indoor conditions, and once in humdrum parochial conditions, *all* with amateurs in the cast, I can say without hesitation that someone who knows how to *write* makes the entire difference to this struggle. Whatever fault may be found with this particular play, its writing gives the producer a totally different opportunity—because here is life and gaiety and no sermonizing. And in religious drama it is more abundant *life* that is our concern. Here also is the much needed imaginative power which requires no scenery, in fact almost benefits from not having it.

Finally—though I could expound at length about what is *not* wanted—I cannot end without stressing how truly desperate we are for co-operation in this work from real authors. I could give illustrations of the quite astounding results which can occur, when adequate writing gives Christian amateurs a proper opportunity for expressing through their acting their often immensely humbling strong convictions. I can never forget my own surprise to see an audience in a London church get on their knees after they had seen Richard

Ward's *Holy Family* played by a group from Sheffield. Of course, the thing I am talking about does demand the acceptance of certain limitations. Those limitations may well be something which results in strength. My plea is for imaginative co-operation in experiment and in acceptance of limitations. I do not hesitate to say that it can be a most immensely exciting experiment, and that if it is *not*, then from my own point of view it is not being what I call real religious drama! The Christian faith should be the most exciting thing in the world—and the reason for the off-putting effect of the phrase " religious drama " is largely that the absence of co-operation of *real* writers has so often made it dull. I think too that shortage of real plays has meant untold damage being done in the way that existing material is perpetually used in its wrong context. I just managed to stop one ardent vicar doing *Jimmy Brown* in Church! But I was not able to stop many Pilgrim Player performances that I myself consider were pretty shockingly out of place—and consequently bad for the reputation of religious drama. Personally I would like to see it stated on such a script as the musical *Jeremiah*, " This play is intended for production with teddy boys "; or on *T'Other Shift*, " Only allowed on the shop floor "; or perhaps most desirable of all—the real work of art, " For universal consumption "!


# NEW PLAYS

**KING OF ALL KINGS** *By G. R. Myers* 3*s.* 6*d. net*

This is a new Easter play in which the author incorporates some of the scenes from his play *Amor Christi.*

**OUT OF BONDAGE** *By Patrick B. Mace* 2*s.* 6*d. net*

This play aims at being an interpretation, not a retelling, of the story of the Fall, set in a modern context and brought up to date, so to speak, in the light of the answer to man's dilemma which is given in the Gospels.

**THE TWO TREES** *By John Southworth* 3*s.* 6*d. net*

This play has been written for children, but it could also be acted by adults or a combination of both. The trees are the Tree of Knowledge, of good and evil, and the Tree of Life. There are eight male characters, two females and six animals, but parts can be easily doubled. The setting is very simple.

*Please write for descriptive play catalogues*

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# THE PLAYWRIGHT AS A MEMBER OF A GROUP

JAMES FORSYTH

It is the fashion to think that a play can be " got up " by a group of people getting together and pooling a number of talents, the dominating one of which is usually the Producer. I am quite unfashionable in this. And anything I say will be from the following standpoint.

If you are going to produce in the end something of worth, it must have—to whatever modest or ambitious scale you care to go—authority. Within the sphere of Christian Drama, this is more and more important. For if the work does not have authority, it will not be just poor, it will be vicious. These are strong words, but the exploiting skill of the powers of destruction given the opportunity of vacuity, are enormous. The Devil ain't no amateur.

Authority, in the field of imaginative writing, should normally come from an author. And in the field of Theatre the playwright has no business to dodge the responsibilities of authorship.

So—as the first practical point—if you are going to work with a playwright, amateur or professional, in your group, be prepared to award him or her authority within author's responsibilities or think again.

Let me make it quite clear that I believe that there is such a thing as a creative group working under what is called the one authority and that it can sometimes in the end produce a work of worth and authority. But it is mighty unusual. And in the amateur field it is usually best—except in an experimental, educative exercise—to work under the commanding authority of a good play by a good author. For I believe that a good author is so by a right relationship to the authority of the Creator. You cannot " get this up "

Let me also make it clear that I am speaking from the experience of having been many times a " bad author ". I have myself taken part in theatre experiments with students of a very advanced level in this very business of the playwright serving a group consisting of Producer, Designer, Players, all working on an idea towards the hope of evolving a play. And it is good for writing and bad for authorship. I have also seen this sort of creative unit do wonders in the film world and, not to the same extent, in the TV world. And it is a very exciting thing to do; and I would in fact encourage amateur groups, not perplexed with finances, to do any such experiments; but as experiments, not on the false hopes of the fashion which presumes that playwrights come ten-a-penny and plays can be " got up " if you've got the notion, the technical skill and the group.

Within this sphere of vital theatre experiment I do believe that the Amateur group can foster and help the amateur writer to become a play-writer.

There are a number of writers for the theatre today, wrongly called playwrights and who are, in fact, the worst enemies of the thing called a Play. For a play has those entities, integrities and totality of form and content which can come only out of the harmony of the artistic mind. The harmony of a group cannot often strike the resounding note to bring a work to its fullness and completeness. I am for the Play—that contemporary orphan

And I am for the Playwright who is for the Play. For I think that only in dedication to that, does the Creator permit true creation in this sphere.

Now that puts the flag flying high enough to be generally seen. Under that flag, I would say, please let the writer of plays take part on at least an equal footing with the players of plays, the producer of plays, the designers of plays, in the amateur field. It is more easy to seem up to a certain standard as a player than as a play-writer. And though there will always be fewer play-writers around than players, is it wrong to discourage the precious possibility that you have a potential playwright around?

It seems to me that actual encouragement to write can happen in this way. In a group where people are met, not to serve a play, but perhaps an idea or a theme, and your writer has not the authority to create a play, he can do many things, all of which are invaluable service. But first one must know what is being served by everyone. And it must be something that the Producer can also serve, or you land up serving your Producer. Which is all very nice, but not the point.

If you choose to serve an idea or a theme, the obvious dangers are a kind of point-making propaganda drama, but if you choose to serve a story, it is better. Because every member of the group can more clearly, and critically, relate his or her particular contribution to a story than to a theme or idea. There is something there—a form—which can contain and be enriched by what everyone has to give. And much of Theatre's legitimate claim to vitality is this opportunity for a number of talents to contribute to a central event.

Your writer can then measure up his talent to making a scenario of the story, to making notes on characterization, to the imaginative writing of stage directions and, that important business, the lucid lay-out of scripts. And he can write dialogue and see it used. For the ability to write vital stage dialogue is quite a business in itself. And, if you have a story to start with, he can have the instructive excitement of finally relating the actual event of performance to how his script has served the story.

In all this the writer is acting not so much as playwright, but script-writer; a servant of an intention other than his own as author. This is what happens often in Film and TV Drama. It is in the Theatre that the Play and the Playwright should be most at home, but the above sort of script-writing is good preparation for this.

Yet, quite apart from writing, it would be wrong also to shut one's eyes to the fact that one of the best possible opportunities an amateur drama group can give a potential playwright is opportunity to get to know his art by playing parts himself, designing scenes, operating lights, etc. And the play-writing is probably best nursed within experimental productions till such a time as a full try-out of a complete play crops up; with the emergence of a play.

Anyway, let us be in no doubt that true authorship of plays is a mighty important business within the whole sphere of Theatre and any real encouragement to the emergence of new authors of plays is to be welcomed. But let us be in no doubt that the real playwright comes few and far between. Yet perhaps by goodwill, courtesy, industry and the right invitation to the right authorizing spirit, a number of good groups could help to make it not so few and not so far between.

# MODERN DRESS OR CLOTHES?

NANCY LAMPLUGH

"I'm sorry there's nothing for the designer to do this time, as we're playing in modern dress. Next time we'll choose a costume play."

Our traditional covering of a layer of clothing, whether practical, conventional, aesthetic, or all three, is a fascinating study, often a key to the personality of the wearer, and certainly to the society in which he lives.

Looking backwards, many people have a vague idea in their minds, about 1925 perhaps, before which clothes should be thought of as costume, at least for the stage; and for a production this means the help of a designer. The style must be studied, colour and material chosen, and much hard work done cutting patterns, making and fitting costumes and studying the finished effect. The earlier in date the period chosen, the freer the designer feels to choose almost any colour and material, and surface decoration (provided it is in "period"), because an audience would probably be unaware of the liberties taken.

All the effort for a "costume" production, from the designer's point of view, can go into building up a really aesthetic result with the group of figures and the set. In fact the character and personality that each player ought to assume is sometimes forgotten, in working for the visual effect. In much the same way, a craftsman using figures as the basis for a design, may deliberately choose historic or national costume because of the freedom and decorative possibilities of shape and colour.

One other element often comes into the idea of "costume" though it may be quite subconscious, and that is the feeling of romance and a sort of fairy-tale fantasy. Present-day clothing seems so prosaic and personal, linked with the shopping or the day in the office, and dictated by the clothing industry.

Most people dress in the fashion of the day, and to ignore this is usually considered the mark of a rebel or an eccentric, but even the rebels can be sorted into groups. Sandals, duffle-coats, jeans, beards and long hair, and the Teddy-boy outfit, are so well known as to be almost a uniform for certain groups, and a fashion in themselves, though never for the majority. Clothes have a subtle influence, and even those who conform to what they feel is the "right" way to dress, are still affected by their clothes, whether they are an instinctive choice or something they feel obliged to wear. Spring is traditionally hailed with at least some new clothes, and in spite of the advertisements dry cleaning the old ones leaves one with a feeling of having failed to rise to the occasion. A guest who dressed carefully for an evening invitation spent a disturbed time aware of the effect of her tan-coloured dress against her hostess's red-purple carpet. Only the very boldest would claim to be quite immune to the thought of the effect of their clothes on others and few can face unselfconsciously the battery of critical eyes, knowing that their clothes do not match up to the occasion.

The effect that clothes can have on a person is subtle, but the effect that a person can have on his or her clothes is straightforward observation, at least by others. A row of men's hats can be fairly easily attached to their owners, not only for their style, but also for the pinch here and slant there

hat is each particular man's idea of a hat. It may also express something of is idea of himself—a solid citizen, an intellectual, a successful business man, r even someone of no importance.

Two women who shared a flat dressed in almost identical clothes. One arge and tall, a teacher of science and botany, the other small and trim, a eacher of mathematics. Their dress was almost invariably a tweed skirt, a ilk blouse, with a knot of two colours of narrow ribbon at the neck, wool ardigan, wool stockings, ankle socks and brogues, most of which were in eutral colours. The mathematician wore her clothes with neatness and recision; they fitted her and retained their intended shape, looking com-ortable and unobtrusive. The scientist made her clothes part of her dominant nd eccentric personality. The skirt sagged unevenly because the waistband ould find no certain resting-place, since she rarely stood upright. The ardigan hung untidily, the corners stretched by forceful hands pushed into he pockets. Ankle socks turned sometimes down, sometimes up with the wner's name tag showing. A long fringed wool scarf hung precariously rom one shoulder and was retrieved a dozen times a day, sometimes to be ound round college fashion. A large hand-made leather bag hung from ne arm, and a cropped head was topped by a man's trilby from which the ent had been pushed, the angle varying from hour to hour with the stresses f the day. Her clothes and accessories became an almost inseparable part f her personality.

Students of illustration have to be very much aware of " types " of people, nd need to make a record of sketch-book notes and photographs for eference. People vary enormously in shape and stature, features, hair styles, acial expression and posture, and not the least in dress. With the exception f the small unorthodox minority, certain styles become almost symbolic of ertain groups of people. A humorous artist has a flair for discovering just hose symbols which amuse us in others (and which we would rather not hink we possessed ourselves!) Most often perhaps the signs of increasing ge in figure, or the signs of wear and use which change our clothes from the ashion-plate to a more personal shape. (The label " crease-resisting " has rought hope to many.) At the other end of the scale we usually find just as musing over-dress, either coldly elegant or indiscreetly flashy.

A stage designer needs just the same sort of observation and selection as he illustrator, and in a modern dress production each individual has to be ooked at from the point of view of " group ", background, habits and ersonality. Players can seldom be allowed to wear their own clothes, ecause these are " themselves " and seldom just right for the part. Even aving aside for the moment any aesthetic considerations, the appearance of ach must be carefully thought out.

Once the type of clothing has been chosen, the imprint of the personality n it has to be considered—tidy or slovenly? fresh and clean or grubby? hould the shirt collar look worn and tatty and the tie be badly tied, the suit npressed, spotted and unbrushed and the shoes scuffed and down-at-heel? his may seem to put too much emphasis on scruffiness, but the temptation o have everything too immaculate is very strong, and one lonely smudge of ud will not make a farmer's boot. Clothes acquire a patina of age and ccupation. A workman's overalls will look clean and spruce only on

Monday morning; the grocer's white coat is marked with rubbing on the counter; middle-aged waistcoat buttons are strained, suits acquire an unwanted shine, and much sat-in skirts begin to sag. These are all details which help to make a part convincing. Elderly parts too, probably ought to have the bulky appearance given by layers of thick warm underclothing, and this will also help to slow and stiffen the movements, in contrast the teen-ager needs the minimum of clothing to allow lithe and easy movement.

All this suggests only one approach to a modern dress play, that of absolute realism; and one dictated to a large extent by the type of play. Although costumes might be altered and worked on to fit the part, there would hardly be any point in amateurs trying to make specially things which could be begged or borrowed, or even bought second-hand. Women's clothes can be more easily made, but a man's suit is out of reach.

Charles Williams's *The House by the Stable* and *Grab and Grace* provide good material for a production in modern dress, because each character is symbolic, and gives a lead to the type of dress that is suitable. In *The House by the Stable*, the scene opened with Man immaculate in a dinner-jacket flattering to his vanity and in keeping with his life of pleasure and self-indulgence. Pride in a short black evening dress, altered to make it more flashy and seductive by the suggestion of a low square décolletage in a harsh magenta, the same colour used for a flower to hold back a swept hair-style. Gabriel, tall and strongly built, wore black trousers and a white linen jacket informal, suggesting his position in service to Man, yet giving him an appearance of being completely at ease. Hell appeared in a neat check suit of man-about-town, with a somewhat self-conscious bow-tie. The contrast was felt immediately when Joseph and Mary came in; Joseph in a drab grey suit, cheap and ordinary, dressed formally for his visit to town, in collar and tie, his cloth cap in his hand. Mary, traditionally in blue, a plain woollen dress under a short camel-coloured maternity jacket, a scarf over her head. Played in front of a neutral curtain, the set was built up with a few pieces of simple modern furniture, chosen carefully for its colour and good design. This formed the area of Man's house, and a small group of grey-covered boxes for the stable; two compact bundles of straw placed to give some atmosphere.

*Grab and Grace* seemed to offer a lighter theme, and the feeling of a fresh summer garden was given by a small lattice arch over which grew large formally-shaped paper flowers, and a similarly formal tree; sunny lighting picked up the yellow-green in each. Hell and Pride entered, bearing the marks of their journey through the " malignant lands ". Hell in dirty flannels and that most dismal of all garments, a very dirty raincoat, with a stained and shapeless trilby. Pride in a shapeless and patchy grey jersey, a marked and dusty black skirt and down-at-heel shoes. They searched the sack and produced a grey hessian robe with a hood, which made Pride no more attractive, but vaguely nun-like. Gabriel came in with a sweeping brush, wearing a white shirt with the sleeves rolled, and a green baize apron. The apron was useful to suggest morning, a servant's position, and also to give a bright note of colour. Faith's entrance in a fresh smart dress of pale green and white, with white shoes and beads, infuriated Pride in her " shroud " with which she had hoped to please Man's changed heart. Man himself was

resh, spruce and confident in neat charcoal-grey slacks and a good tweed ports jacket, white shirt and soft yellow tie. Grace, the boy working on he estate, gave an opportunity for a note of colour with a gay, large-checked hirt and light blue jeans.

The costume in these two plays was chosen first for its symbolism, but econd, and importantly, for its colour and atmosphere. In the first, a dark nd garish group for Man's life of sin, and the nondescript drabness of overty in the stable, with the one traditional note of soft blue. In the second he colourful, fresh, gay group of Man's new household and the contrast of he dirty drabness of Hell and Pride. The simple sets were carefully chosen nd the first suggested a house quite as well as an elaborately constructed replace or doors and windows would have done. Only Faith's dress was nade specially; a few items were the players' own, but all were carefully lanned and sought for. Lighting was the only thing used to suggest at imes that Gabriel was no ordinary servant.

The dress of our own time has been very lacking in colour, particularly for nen, but colour is coming back increasingly. Even if schemes have to be nainly neutral, they can still be interestingly planned. Tones of black, grey nd white can make very striking décor, and one note of bright colour in uch a scheme can be dramatic. In *West Side Story* the two gangs are subtly listinguished by warm colours in one group and cool in the other. When heir girls are with them, this grouping is accentuated by the clearer, stronger olours that they wear, heightening the warm and cool effect. One expects uch deliberate design in a musical or ballet, but the same approach can be nade to any stage production.

Fantasy and unreality are easily accepted on the stage, walls are visible at ne moment, papered, hung with pictures, and seeming quite solid. The next noment they fade into thin gauze and present an entirely different scene. he set may be a few isolated symbols of buildings, an abstraction that onveys an idea rather than presents it in reality. Costumes may do the same, nd convey an idea or effect without any attempt at realism. The symbols f a particular style of dress can be used and exaggerated. The slim dark ook of the city suit, helped by the rolled umbrella and bowler hat. The ulky, shapeless raggedness of the professional tramp. This is perhaps the nost difficult approach of all, and the designer must have a keen eye for line nd silhouette, and also considerable skill in cutting, or the result may be hapeless and meaningless. There are endless possibilities for experiment in his direction.

Plays which are set in our own time are often the most forceful. Costume nd décor for these must be taken seriously if it is to give them the life and isual quality that it is its function to do.

# LITURGY AND THEATRE

## OLOV HARTMAN

There is a boredom common to overspiritualized worship and secularized heatre. A religious service becomes dull when it offers to God only a ragment of human reality; and in my opinion, the theatre becomes dull

when it presents only a post-mortem examination of human reality to an audience consisting merely of the public in general, and the critics in particular. Actors and audience are all that represents reality, and God has nothing to do with the theatre.

To be honest, I believe that the theatre is seldom entirely secularized. Usually it assumes that the " slice of life " it presents is of real interest; it concerns, or should concern, the audience. Why should Oedipus tear out his eyes? Once we ask such a question of a play we are invoking a god who lies outside the action. It may indeed be Zeus, or an abstraction like Humanity, but there is some sort of altar there; and where there is an altar there is an impulse towards liturgy.

Spasmodic attempts are made to conquer dullness in the theatre by moving the stage down among the audience, or by the use of naturalistic or symbolic techniques. But so long as drama presents a reality with no spectators on the other side of the ultimate footlights, so long will its tension fail to penetrate much below the surface, and so long will it remain on the level of a parlour game.

Drama borrows its situations from real life; events do not take place in the theatre. What happens on the stage is a version of what happened, or might happen, elsewhere. Its likeness to life is of the same order as that of a game of " Monopoly " to the business world. Its tensions are artificial, it is a play for relaxation. True, this game of " let's pretend " may capture our interest, but that is another matter.

In the liturgy the chancel represents heaven. But more than this, faith tells us that when we celebrate the Eucharist, heaven is actually present. It is not enough merely to call to mind " the night in which the Lord was betrayed ". Maundy Thursday is there, enveloping the earthly reality; atonement is there; God is there. All liturgy focuses on this point, and from this point stems the rare reality—consciousness of worship. It does not represent, it is. We do not watch a performance, we meet reality.

The footlights for this drama are at the altar, and on the other side there is nothing but the great darkness out of which unseen eyes watch us.

All worship points in this direction, and the object of those parts of the liturgy which are directed towards the congregation (lesson, sermon, etc.) is to draw the whole company into the action: an action which is directed across the ultimate footlights. There is no audience, no dualism between actor and observer on this side of the altar. There is one community, and though the congregation may be dumb, they are never merely listeners; they are listened to. This is a presentation, not a representation.

The " Amen " which St Paul allots to the congregation in 1 *Corinthians*, xiii is not applause, it is participation. And how many fewer " props " the congregation require to experience participation than an audience require to imagine themselves present at some event!

When the liturgy becomes theatre and the altar is removed, the chancel screen becomes the footlights, and the community is inevitably divided into actors and audience. However the stage is tampered with, it is impossible to escape this dualism, for there is no longer an altar, a place of appeal to which all eyes can turn. Drama has taken the audience for its god, and the reviews

are the last judgement it recognizes. This god reigns absolute over the play. Instead of the veil of the temple he has a mirror, for the audience is on both sides of the footlights, imitating itself, and watching itself being imitated. The audience, as though seized by a silent doubt, demands that it be shown to be interesting. So the slight symbolic gesture is lost in theatrical gestulation; and liturgical dress degenerates into costume that must be constantly changing. The theatre becomes a mannequin.

But however much the theatre does for its new god, he is still outside, for the audience is a company apart.

This description is oversimplified, for the historical development is more complicated, and a number of the phenomena I have mentioned can be ascribed to other causes than the separation from the liturgy. But I believe these phenomena would be inconceivable in a drama which was interwoven with the liturgy. The influence of the liturgy—at least on Christian soil—is strongly opposed to imitative forms which, compared with the slight, pregnant symbols of the altar, are nothing short of barbaric. There is no need to wander in with a piece of scenery when a gesture will suffice.

Historically it is clear that drama begins in worship. And it is worthwhile to reflect what might have been different if the drama had not as good as lost its orientation to the altar. It may not be too late to recover some of the lost values.

This does not mean that the theatre is to become a church or a pulpit. But the actual connection between theatre and church should be recognized and made plain, for they do not oppose one another. High Mass needs the theatre's clear speech and knowledge of the world; and the theatre needs a new knowledge of the category of intercession, since all genuine drama is intercession (though often to an unknown god).

Church drama is the missing link between the two, for here liturgy and dramatics are united, without either being watered down to harmlessness.

There have been few creditable attempts in this direction. Perhaps the best is *Murder in the Cathedral*. And many un-Christian church walls and theatre curtains will have to be torn down before St Genesius is given his rightful place in the chancel and on the stage.

### About the Author

Olov Hartman is a priest of the Swedish Church. He is famous in his own land for the work he has done on the relationship between drama and liturgy, and his liturgical plays have been performed throughout Sweden. They are characterized by their close affinities with liturgy: symbolic gesture, liturgical costume, minimal movement and so on.

His work is of great importance to those concerned with techniques of worship, and their links with drama. Owing to linguistic difficulties, and the abstruse nature of the subject, his explorations are not so well known in Great Britain as they deserve to be. This article is the first of several which *Christian Drama* hopes to publish. It has been considerably reduced in length, and freely rendered by Philip Turner from a literal translation of the original Swedish.

# THE DOMINION OF DANGER

JAMES BRABAZON

On November 10th, at the Festival Hall Recital Room, Theatre Group Productions presented a new Poetry Theatre programme entitled *The Dominion of Danger*.

As with their previous programme *The Beast and the Angel* (reviewed in the Summer 1960 issue of *Christian Drama*) the programme consisted of selections of verse, prose, and drama arranged to illustrate and illuminate a theme; the theme this time being that of conflict, physical, mental and spiritual, and its resolution—the delight of battle, the futility of war, the destructiveness of hatred, the sterility of the law, the necessity for compassion and the supremacy of love. The whole programme is carried on the shoulders of one actor and one actress, with nothing but a few chairs as setting and props.

And first it must be said that for these two performers to have sustained the interest of an audience in this way for a good two hours of playing time, with mood, tempo and characterization constantly changing and at each change having to be established instantly, is in itself a very considerable feat of concentration and technical ability. For the range of the selections is great, and the performers have not only to know how to speak several styles of verse beautifully and convincingly (and anyone who listens to the BBC Third Programme will know that this is by no means a universal attribute), but must also be at least passable in intense tragedy (Strindberg), high romance (James Elroy Flecker), and farcical fantasy (Lewis Carroll). I can think of very few performers who would not make one chew one's finger-nails in one or other of these styles, but the performances of William Fry and Sylvia Read were constantly satisfying and often a great deal more.

Secondly the producer's part in this must be given its due. John Downing's hand was evident in every moment of the programme, and in a way the achievement of the evening was his even more than the performers'. The whole thing bore the stamp of style, invention and control, in a way that can be said of very few West End productions, and the discretion with which he used business when it was necessary and eschewed it when it was not was most admirable; particularly at a time when the cry of many producers seems to be "Turmoil for turmoil's sake". Both the audience and the players owe him a great deal.

About the programme itself I am less certain. Unlike *The Beast and the Angel* this one had no linking material, and the theme had to be illuminated entirely by the juxtaposition of the excerpts.

There was a great deal to admire, certainly, in the breadth of reading and taste that had gone into the choice of material, and in the imagination which set the familiar beside the unfamiliar, comedy beside tragedy, and prophecy in the middle of it all; and by prophecy I mean in particular those magical Songs of Blake and extracts from Whitman which without fuss or apology pierce straight to the heart of the mysteries of good and evil, compassion and love.

But in a collection of works as varied as this there must be (particularly if there is no linking material) a very powerful and easily followed theme. The authors who are represented were not writing with this programme in mind, and particularly in the longer passages there are a number of different themes and overtones, so unless the audience knows precisely what it is looking *for*, it may be mentally chasing red herrings a good deal of the time—which can be exhausting as well as fruitless. It seemed to me that the development of the theme in this case was not clearly enough marked. The various sections of the programme were designed to look at the subject of Danger from different angles, and sometimes rather oblique angles, rather than progressively to lead us into the heart of the matter, which I believe we would have preferred.

For example, the final passage—the altogether delightful story of Lord George Hell in Max Beerbohm's *The Happy Hypocrite*. The tale is faultless in its sentiments, but there is a slightness about it, a sense of tongue-in-cheek, which tends to spoil what is being said if one is looking, as I think one must be, for a climax, a clinching statement on the theme.

God forbid that such a programme should be " earnest ". The light and shade are right and admirable. But it seemed to me that those who put the programme together were not entirely certain about the aesthetic shape that it should take. And who shall blame them, for it is a very novel and experimental form, with the additional difficulty that they are trying as it were to build a house out of stones which have been cut for a number of totally different purposes, some large and light, some small and heavy, some large and heavy, and all of irregular shapes. But my impression was the architects were not entirely sure about the sort of house they wanted in the end, and the result was a bit draughty and out of proportion.

Whether the solution is to provide a little cement in the form of linking commentary, or to be a little more ruthless in cutting the stones to their new purpose, I should hate to have to say. But it is clear that a programme of this kind will never appeal to those who simply want " an evening out ". It sets out to deal, however entertainingly, with something serious. And I would suggest that the design should take into account the desire of almost every human being not merely to be told the truth but to be lifted into an imaginative realm in which the truth reveals itself without needing to be told. For me this happened several times during the evening, with the Blake, the Whitman, the extract from Strindberg's *The Father*, the " quality of mercy " speech—(though this was almost too hackneyed)—in short where the great writers had contributed; and for this I am truly grateful. And I would have thought that these were the sort of passages to which the lesser ones should have led, by a sort of happy and painless progression up the mountainside—so that from the top we can survey and fit into its place the countryside we have passed on the way.

I think that *The Dominion of Danger* is something very much to be seen and heard, and I hope it will be widely booked, not only for its own sake but to encourage further work of the same kind. It is extremely simple and cheap to present (a large drawing room would do), and many times more entertaining and profitable than most of what we see either on the professional stage or in the parish hall.

# CORRESPONDENCE

THE EDITOR,
*Christian Drama.*

DEAR SIR,

In the Winter issue of *Christian Drama*, a report from the United States indicates that " the cultivation of playwrights is the most important, the most difficult, and the slowest job which ' religious drama ' in America must undertake ". In the third annual Religious Arts Festival, we in Rochester, New York, are trying to undertake this " cultivation ". Through a drama competition, we are endeavouring to stimulate the writing of new plays of *high* quality. Through productions during the Festival itself, we are offering a " showcase " for these plays. I realize that the Spring issue of *Christian Drama* will appear much after the deadline for entries in the 1961 competition. I hope, however, that some mention of our Festival can be made, as it is, of course, not too soon to be thinking of 1962.

In its short life the Religious Arts Festival has grown to include entries and correspondence from over three hundred cities in forty-six states, from several parts of Canada, Europe, and South Africa. We feel this is a good indication that an event of this kind, with uncompromisingly high artistic standards, and with neither denominational nor doctrinal barriers is welcomed by many people.

When we read of the wonderful programmes that the Religious Drama Society initiates, and the news of plays presented in so many places in Great Britain, we know that we have a long way to go. We hope, however, for your support, co-operation, and interest.

Thank you. Sincerely,

MARION S. DABOLL.

# ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY

## PLAYS

**The Calling of Wenceslas.** PHILIP WORNER. (George Ronald, 5/–). H. 3 parts. Large mixed cast.

A chronicle play on a large scale, in prose, on the life of the historical St Wenceslas, King of Bohemia, and the intrigues and strife that surrounded him. Written for, and first produced at, Worcester Training College. (Fee: apply League of Dramatists.)

**The Cup.** AIDA REUBENS. (Typescript.) H. 4 acts. 3m., 7w.

A prose play about Christ's Ministry, as seen by Joanna " the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward ". (Fee: apply author, c/o R.D.S.)

**The First Easter Day.** W. MAULEVERER. (Mowbray, 2/6.) H.

This simple Easter play, reviewed earlier as a typescript, is now available in print. (Fee: 10/–.)

**The Kingdom of God** and **The Prophets.** NORMAN J. BULL. (Heinemann, 6/– each.) *Dramatized Bible Readers* series.

" These two books set out to be didactic. They seek to teach many Old and New Testament stories, together with the meaning and truth revealed by those stories. Both of these objects are achieved excellently.

The aim of the author is to use the stories as dramatized readings and in this he is quite successful. These are not plays, and in performance the readings would of necessity be fairly formal. Their value lies in the choice of material which is so valuable in providing an appeal, that young people would meet the Biblical stories without being intimidated by the overwhelming mass of material.

The illustrations by Freda Nichols are fascinating. They provide a study in themselves." *Kay Hudson.*

**A Man For All Seasons.** ROBERT BOLT. (Heinemann, 7/6.) H. 2 acts. 11m., 3w.

For a full account of this exciting play by a rising dramatist, see *London Theatre* on p. 4.

A preface by the author particularly merits study. (Fee: amateurs; apply S. French, Ltd.)

**Plays for Reading and Recording.** T. S. LOVE *and* W. D. CUMMING. (Harrap, 6/–.)

Specimen scripts suggested for play-reading or putting on tape by Youth Groups; of interest, but it would be within the capacities of most groups to make their own scripts on the same lines.

**REFERENCE BOOKS**

**The Church and the Arts.** Ed. F. GLENDENNING. (S.C.M. Press, 6/–.)

A symposium of articles on the relation of the various arts (including drama) to the Church at the present time.

" This I have read with enormous interest, and I think it is a publication of real value, not only on account of the contents of the articles contained in it, but because it does show what an ordinary group of people can do with their own parish and church, simply by giving their time and their individual talents to the cause." *Norma Nutman.*

**Training the Youth Group.** DEREK TASKER. (Mowbray, 6/6.)

" This book should prove of great value to clergy, youth leaders and teachers who are dealing with young people in the 14–18 age group, and who wish to give training to further the spiritual development of each young person. The practical nature of the problems discussed: the Christian at home; the Christian and his job: the use of spare time, make this book of immediate interest." *Norma Nutman.*

# FAR AND WIDE

**Dawlish, Devon**

This small town of 7,500 inhabitants has much to commend it to devotees of the Arts; a small oasis of culture in a parochial setting, that can claim an annual Arts Festival, a thriving amateur repertory company that owns its own theatre, and a musical society.

At Christmas, 1960, in the Repertory Company's Shaftesbury Theatre, the Vicar and some Church members, joining with Repertory members, presented two Nativity plays, *The Backyard Miracle* by Stuart Jackman, and *The House by the Stable* by Charles Williams.

These two plays in the modern idiom made a profound impression upon both actors and audience, bringing to the Nativity story a realism and application rarely achieved by the more orthodox and sentimental type of Christmas production.

Carefully prepared introductions, pointed use of suitable music on tapes and records, and the barest essentials in stage dressing, produced an atmosphere into which the actors projected a sincerity born of oneness with the script.

Both plays point the urgent fact that every time a child is born, Christ is born again, and our personal responsibility for its reception is no less than that of the Innkeeper at Bethlehem, who was the symbolic host for us all. Both audiences and actors found this wholly acceptable and poignant, but less comforting than the type of Nativity play which offers velvety-blue starlit skies, lowing cattle, sweet-smelling hay and richly attired Kings.

*The House by the Stable* presented the more difficult task for the cast and producer, being in essence a modern morality play, and in verse, but its sincerity of purpose enabled all to rise admirably to the challenge.

All Christian action must be motivated by humility and love for our fellow men, and not from a sentimental desire to do good—no better spur to right thinking could be found than this "double bill".

J. E. J. S.

* * *

**Goudhurst, Kent**

Writing about Nativity Plays is not easy, as to some of us the subject itself is difficult. One watches with one's mind almost equally divided. One half saying "This subject is so tremendous that no presentation can be adequate, so do not criticize"—the other half saying "If this is to be shown in a dramatic form, the whole thing should be acted to the very best ability of everyone concerned". One starts then with one's critical faculty in a kind of stranglehold.

But from the first moments of *Led by a Star* at St Mary's Church, Goudhurst, given on December 11th and 12th, 1960, when, before the actual performance had begun, a small golden angel sped noiselessly up the shadows of a darkened aisle, something happened. For as she ran, she turned and smiled and one realized suddenly "Why—that is a child I know"—a contact was established between the everyday world and—something else. What this was became clearer as the play began. From the first few moments two things were pre-eminent:—Reverence and Discipline. From these proceeded naturally, great dignity and clear diction from the principal characters—Beauty of movement and grouping from every member of the cast.

The dialogue of this play has the great merit of making one feel "This *is* how people might have talked". Shepherds, kings, and villagers were as natural as the Holy Family, Angels and Archangels were super-natural, and both elements were knit together by the beautiful singing of the unseen Choir.

The age-long story came to a close. The cast processed down the Nave, and as the last little Angels disappeared from view, lights sprang up in the darkened Church.

One was back in the everyday world, which for a short space of time had been linked to a vision of the Eternal.

A. G.

* * *

**Malvern, Worcs.**

Although we have sent no account of ourselves for over a year, the New World Players have been quite active, and having just finished our current production, we feel now is the time to write.

Both last Christmastide and this Epiphanytide we gave performances in different local Churches of a simple Nativity play called *The Day of His Coming*. As our drama group contains a number of people who are keen to partake in a play but are not so anxious to speak, our producer Mary Dixey, compiled a play with a part for a Narrator, who reads passages from the New Testament while the shepherds and wise men bring the story to life in mime. Then there are also quite considerable parts for a group of speakers who stand watching the action and bring it to bear on our lives today. The shepherds come to the manger, "And we come also to the manger," say the speakers, "Called from our daily duties, with no great gifts to offer, but like the shepherds simply with the tools of our labours . . . all that we had at the time of our calling . . ."

The stained-glass colours of the speakers' costumes in the varying groupings were very striking, and the wise men in their gorgeous robes providing a colourful climax. Again the speakers brought the action into modern times. "We bring as our gold, all that is best in men . . . Our frankincense is prayer . . . our myrrh is sorrow . . . for a world astray . . . for broken homes and lives . . .our own personal sorrows that the world will never know of . . ."

By the end of the performances we all felt that we had taken part in a sincere personal offering, an offering of ourselves and all we had done in the preparation of the play.

In Holy Week we presented a simple mime, *That We Might Live*, with words taken entirely from the Bible. Some speaking was done by those in the cast, especially in the crowd scenes during the entry into Jerusalem and before Pilate, but for the most part, the story was told by the reader who stood at the

side of the acting area, while the cast translated it into effective mime.

We were very pleased to be invited to give one of the performances of this mime at Tewkesbury, our second visit to this lovely Abbey.

R. G.

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**Maryland, U.S.A.**

The Chancel Players presented their initial offering seven times in four different churches in the Bethesda area of the nation's capital. Babara Walker's script of *Hallowe'en Time* was all about the Ninth Commandment and the cast of twenty-five adults and young people were drawn from drama groups of six denominations and fourteen different churches. Appearances in Baptist, Presbyterian, Congregational and Episcopalian Churches were followed by discussion led by experts to assess the Christian values of the play. Rich characterizations distinguished the play and the community Council of Churches lent invaluable assistance in their sponsorship of the group. Christian plays of significance will be presented as the area tries to search out and encourage local playwrights.

The story concerned an aging schoolteacher whose teaching of intellectual liberty was suddenly flouted by the modern witch-hunters. The whole town became involved in the issues and the teacher, herself felt that she had lost contact with God during these trials. Subsequently a young minister who had been a student of hers was able to help toward a solution. The whole issue of truth in the Commandment, "Thou Shalt Not Bear False Witness", was pointed up in the working-out of the plot.

Elsie Karo.

* * *

**Middlesbrough, Yorks.**

On the fourth Sunday in Advent, Canon Lamb's play *Sons of Adam* was presented in the Parish Church of South Bank, a small Tees-side industrial town. The play took the place of the sermon at Evensong. The actors were members of the congregation, under the direction of John Duncan, one of the curates. The performance of such a play was an innovation to people in South Bank; yet the congregation accepted and appreciated the acting and the play's point.

*Sons of Adam* is a portrayal by five men and four women of the search for a fulfilment of the promises of God to make Israel great and to give them a Saviour. It traces the history of the Jews from the Creation and Fall to the birth of Christ, showing by skilful intermingling of ancient and modern references how the weaknesses and foolish desires of the old peoples have their counterparts today, an impression which is heightened by the play's being performed in modern, casual dress.

The attempts of the kings of Israel to achieve glory for their people through wealth and power fail, and man's true glory is found to be in worship of Christ by shepherds, Magi and Church.

The play was acted on the chancel steps, the chorus speaking in groups from their foot. Lighting was dim, with one spot picking out the small dais and block on which the action was generally focused. Hence the background was one of complete darkness, enhancing the impression that this portrayal of "the tragedy of man" and "God's grace racing to the rescue" stood outside time and space.

Susan Talling.

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**Reigate, Surrey**

St Mark's Players presented a most moving and memorable performance of *Emmanuel* by James Forsyth, on four evenings from December 7th to 11th in the Parish Hall. For those members of the congregation who were able to come along, it provided a most inspiring prelude to the Festival of Christmas, and so beautifully portrayed the message of the coming of Christ.

The whole of the cast, totalling fifteen, performed their individual parts in a most accomplished and sincere manner, and it would be difficult, and in fact unfair, to pick out any individual member for special mention.

A word of praise must also be given to those responsible for the scenery. The facilities in the Hall are very limited, and when it is realized that in both the first and second acts there were eight changes to be effected, their ability was certainly tested, and not found wanting.

**Rotherham, Yorks.**

*It's Coming to Us All*, a new play by John Hunter, was given its first two performances in December at Kimberworth Park, a new housing estate in Rotherham, and a third performance was given at New Rossington, a mining village in South Yorkshire. Thus the play was tested before the sort of audience Mr. Hunter had in mind when writing it. The cast was indigenous, representing steel (the main industry of the area), mining, trades union administration, accountancy, sales representation, and housewifery!

The production was of Miss Keily's usual standard. To say only this may seem to be parsimonious in praise, but over the years one has got so used to the incredibly high standard she reaches with the rawest of amateurs, that only a failure to reach this standard would be remarkable. In style, this production is slightly reminiscent of Ghéon's *Christmas in the Market Place*, with the cast openly (though very lightly) equipping themselves with costumes and props appropriate to the various roles they assume.

And so to the play itself. In construction it resembles the book of Job, with Prologue, Argument, and Epilogue —and indeed, the argument itself has close affinities with that book. The prologue announces the death of Jim, a young father, in a motor accident, and shows something of the reactions of widow and neighbours. The epilogue gives a glimpse, some three years later, of his widow's attempt to rebuild her shattered life. The argument consists of flash-backs in which we trace the life of Jim from the moment of birth until the tragedy of his death at the time when marriage and parenthood have begun to reveal their ripest joys.

All this is punctuated and illuminated by a series of songs, while one of them— the " theme " song—constantly recurs as a sort of grand base to the theme. These songs are catchy, and in " pop " styles of various kinds. It will be seen that " Play " is an inadequate description of what has much of the musical comedy and revue about it.

To many people, the chief weakness will seem to lie in the character of Sam, the churchman. He is a deliberately unsympathetic character, whose unwitting intervention brings about a deep change in the married life of Jim and Edie which is the mainspring of the play. Criticism of his unsatisfactory representation of the church is stifled by his own statement that " God chooses some funny people ", but the form of his intervention is more difficult to understand. The fact is that what Sam accomplishes by calling to collect " for the dry rot in the church tower " could just as well have been accomplished by the inadvertent visit of an insurance collector, a Breton onion seller, or a political canvasser about his work. It is true that Sam is supposed to have done much for the couple on subsequent visits, but these are outside the play, and we are left to conjecture about their frequency, purpose, and content.

There is another, minor, criticism. Many clergy and church officers, having sweated blood in the attempt to convert P.C.C's. to the principle of Christian Giving, will look with jaundiced eye upon the form of money-raising which is the occasion of Sam's intervention, or rather of God's intervention through Sam. This objection cannot be sustained theologically, but at this time has no little practical force.

But *It's Coming to Us All* has very important virtues. Above all it is a strikingly successful essay in communication. I have never known the idioms and ways of thought of a northern working-class community to be better caught—and this is a Yorkshireman speaking of a Lancashire writer! In the course of rehearsal, the members of the cast constantly found themselves struck by the way turns of phrase from the play kept applying themselves in their own lives, and came daily from the lips of their neighbours. Moreover, the music, the high spirits, and the general popular appeal of the show make it entertaining in its own right—and lucky is the man who can instruct or argue with people while entertaining them! This is indeed a talent that deserves to be encouraged.

Finally, the play offers no platitudes, pious or otherwise, in answer to the great " why " which insistently looms over cases of tragic bereavement. It hints at an answer which shows itself vaguely within the bewilderment itself, within the experiential persistence of love beyond death, and within the courage which so often in such cases is called up beyond all previous expectation. Its reply is vague and untidy, but

recognizable and recognized by those who have been tormented by the "why" as real. And in this the author is in first-rate company, for here again there is a real affinity with the book of Job.

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**Sheffield, Yorks.**

The aim of the Christian Community Players, to use drama as a focus and stimulant of thought on the problems of religion in modern life, is strikingly illustrated in their latest production, *Showdown*, by Oliver Wilkinson.

A play of about an hour's length is followed by "unscripted" discussion between audience and players.

The latter part of the evening will obviously depend on the interest and enthusiasm of varying audiences; there is no doubt that they will have been given, to begin with, an entertainment which will astonish, provoke, possibly shock, and frequently amuse them.

As a piece of dramatic communication, Oliver Wilkinson's play would be remarkable on any stage.

He tackles a large range of topics—the relations between parson and public, the hand of the church in politics and education, the Christian approach to sociology—and brings these abstractions to dramatic life in the persons of half-a-dozen actors who change into more than twice as many different characters before our eyes.

The expert directing hands of Miss Pamela Keily, and the skill of some of her most experienced players, put a brilliant edge on this extraordinary combination of acting, arguing, clowning and plain talking.

If the play culminates in a large question-mark—what can Christianity do for our complicated industrial society?—that is where the argument begins, and will be continued in the parish halls and clubs fortunate enough to be visited by this talented and devoted company.

—by kind permission of the *Sheffield Telegraph*

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**St Paul's Cathedral**

This is the age of the producer. The knighthood of Tyrone Guthrie marks the arrival in the theatre of the producer as an artist in his own right.

Now, this position having been recognized, it is vital that the producer should not abuse it. The function of a producer is to stage a play, to interpret a script in terms of theatre, and no more.

Mr James Roose Evans produced a lively *Everyman, 1960*, for RADA, conceiving the old morality in terms of a rock and roll singer and his milieu. The characters became people in Everyman's life, rather than abstractions in the medieval manner. Goods was the agent; Beauty the girl friend—and a number of huge photographs were attractively used to illustrate the "glittering career" of Everyman.

The lines were well spoken—but the vast chasm between a rock singer on the telephone and the lines he was speaking simply drew attention to the fact that this device was not a satisfactory one.

A fine and vital performance of Everyman himself simply stated the character in the 1960 framework, and was well felt and conveyed. Of the others, the lawyer managed to escape the shallow cliché approach which passed for character building in the minor parts: and gave a quite delightful performance.

Surely a clearer reading of the text, a more certain grasp of the play's intention, would have been preferable to the box of tricks Mr Evans thrust on us.

D. W. M.

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**Stroud Religious Drama Festival**

A Dominican at the organ; Hochwälder's play *The Strong Are Lonely*, which concerns the Jesuits, upon the stage; a company comprising almost every denomination, and the whole production in an Anglican Church—set the keynote for the 1960 Festival—the Church in action in fact and in deed.

*The Strong Are Lonely* is a thought-challenging work. To obey God's Word and to continue His Work—or to obey man's rules and regulations and destroy that confidence in the Christian God which a convert must have—that was the problem in 1767. It is the vital question to the twentieth-century Christian. The company, drawn from experienced players as well as from enthusiastic beginners, missed nothing in their interpretation. Again and again we in the audience found ourselves "in"

the play, " taking sides ". The presentation had power, and carried conviction. It challenged . . . Just how great that challenge was, *and is*, becomes obvious from the article by D. R. W. Carr " After-thoughts on *The Strong Are Lonely* " in the Winter issue of *Christian Drama*. After-thoughts are continually rising, once one has seen the play. This is probably the most provocative of all the productions by the Stroud Festival Players.

With the Drama Festival, Stroud combined a Festival of the Arts, which included an Art Exhibition (with works ranging from Augustus John to local talent), Poetry Reading by Laurie Lee and William Plomer, and Art Film Evening, and an Orchestral Concert by Philomusica of London. And all centred upon the Parish Church of Stroud. It is a stimulation, and an encouraging thought, that this Festival was born, years ago, of a request by a handful of teenage Boy Scouts who wished to do something useful for their town.

A. B. A.

# THE RELIGIOUS DRAMA SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

166 Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W.C. 2

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON SATURDAY OCTOBER 29th, 1960, AT Y.M.C.A., GREAT RUSSELL STREET, LONDON W.C. 2.

*In the Chair*: MRS K. M. BAXTER

The meeting opened with prayers led by the Rev. R. E. Ayres.

1. **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on October 31st, 1959 were confirmed.**

2. **Apologies for absence were received from:**

Miss Enid Andrews
Miss T. Barton
H. Basford, Esq.
Rev. H. Bassage
Miss M. Audrey Bates
Miss A. Bennett
Miss Bridget Berrington
Mrs E. Bevan
Netlam Bigg, Esq.
Mrs A. R. Bowles
Dame Dorothy Brock
Miss G. Browett
E. Martin Browne, Esq.
Miss Irene Caudwell
Miss Theodora Chadwick
Geoffrey Clarke, Esq.
Rev. A. E. Cordell
Miss Muriel Crane
John F. Evans, Esq.
C. le Fleming, Esq.
Miss Joan Ford
David Forder, Esq.
James Forsyth, Esq.
Girls' Dioc. Assn.
Mrs Ruth Hardy
Mrs Helen Hendy
Miss J. Higgins
Mrs G. Horne
Rev. Dr J. A. Kay
Mrs Florence Knox
Miss D. Marten
Anthony J. May, Esq.
Miss Dorothy Miller
Rev. S. M. Miller
Rev. G. R. Myers
Miss S. M. Pearce
Alec Penn, Esq.
J. H. Perrott, Esq.
Miss Zoe Proctor
Miss H. Raeburn
J. Rimell, Esq.
Miss Dorothea Rock
Miss Joyce Stanley
Canon C. E. Turner
Norman Turnbull, Esq.
Miss Shirley Waide
General N. F. Wilson
Rev. R. W. L. Wiseman
Miss J. Withers

Mrs Baxter conveyed greetings and good wishes from Mr and Mrs E. Martin Browne, who were once again at Union Theological Seminary in New York.

**3. Annual Report. The Chairman read the Annual Report to the Meeting.**

*Finance*

It is pleasant to report that on the year's finances the Society has now come out on the right side. Satisfactory though this is there is no cause for shouting, as will be seen when the Treasurer's report puts the matter in perspective. Here I will briefly mention that the factors achieving this result have been—the introduction of economies foreshadowed at the last A.G.M.; a response to the Chairman's appeal resulting in an increase of £270 in donations; and the greater number of performances, both in this country and in the U.S.A., of certain plays for which we are agents. It must always be remembered that the basis of the Society's operations is the generous annual grant made by S.P.C.K. In addition we have had great assistance from the Rockefeller Foundation, who in 1957 gave us a tapering grant which comes to an end in 1962. Later there will be a special report on Youth work and we must appreciate that this work has been made possible by a welcome grant from the King George Jubilee Trust. We are grateful also for the help given by the Council of Europe towards the cost of the International Conference.

Among the necessary economies effected was a considerable reduction in Miss Nicholl's time as tutor. This handicapped our organization and training and I am glad to be able to say that we are now inviting Miss Nicholl back to her original position as part-time tutor.

The office organization has been rigorously streamlined: your Council has always to be on guard against employing in too literal a sense, a skeleton staff.

*Membership*

The membership at present stands at 1,703, this being an increase of 274 for the same period last year. The new members are approximately equally divided between individuals and groups.

Our need at present is for interested donors to give the several or specific purposes of the Society, rather than merely to secure service for their own drama groups. We work for the Christian Church in a missionary situation and must be prepared to give beyond the limit of self-help.

*Branches*

During the year we changed the method of collecting subscriptions so that Branches are now responsible. The total membership of Branches has remained approximately the same.

It is to be regretted that while most members in Jersey and in South Wales maintain their affiliation they find themselves no longer able to operate as Branches. All Branches are experiencing this difficulty of finding someone with sufficient interest and time to undertake the organizational and secretarial work. The Bristol, Gloucester and Somerset Branch is meeting the situation realistically by sharing the work and responsibilities amongst all members of the Committee. Miss Robins, now released from her International commitments, is once more available to visit and advise.

*Training*

In a sense Training is the life blood of the Society and it is therefore true that the increased demand for Training is a sign of health in us. The Training Committee and the R.D.S. staff are planning for the next five years because the Society must always be looking ahead to anticipate the needs of members and to encourage experiments and new developments.

Various aspects of training are represented by:—

A successful and happy nine-day Summer School at Culham, organized by Miss Pamela Keily, and including for the first time a group of teenagers and a few complete families; short courses in various parts of the country; a course now being held in London for Youth Leaders; a weekend School for members and Youth Leaders next Easter; and looking further ahead, a Summer School in Wales next August.

Youth work, under the administration of Mrs Nutman, is developing soundly. In addition to our tutors' work in individual clubs, the special group at Summer School and the course for leaders being held in London should prove a good foundation on which to build the training of Youth Leaders throughout the country.

*Library*

The Library continues to be one of the busiest parts of our organization. Many new reference books, plays and sets of plays have been added to stock. During the year, 1,151 parcels of books were sent out, in addition to a large number of books and sets taken by those who visited the Library in person. I am sure it is true to say that the advice and help given by the Librarian to those who call and to those who write is much appreciated by members. Members have also co-operated in meeting increases in costs of postage and packing.

*Northern Province*

Miss Pamela Keily has continued her stalwart work as Drama Adviser in the Northern Province, with Martyn Colborn as assistant. Miss Keily has been notably successful in getting new plays written and produced, and has a string of names of those now achieving wider fame, whose first efforts she fostered, or flayed, into vivid life. Martyn Colborn's appointment as Drama Adviser Elect of Coventry Cathedral is in itself a tribute to the value of his early training with the New Pilgrim Players and subsequent work as Miss Keily's second. The Provost has already appointed a Drama Council, a body of professional and amateur theatre representatives, and plans are being made for the writing of plays and their presentation in the new cathedral. The R.D.S. is represented by its chairman, Mr. E. Martin Browne, and in his absence, by Miss Robins.

*Plays in Churches*

The Society continues its efforts to ensure that only plays suitable and worthy in every respect are given performances in churches and we are pleased to report that five Bishops have asked us to act as their permitting authority for plays in churches. This is a task not without its unpopular side, and we urge members to take every opportunity of seeing that plays are submitted to the appropriate authority before production starts, as otherwise alarm and despondency spread like firedamp among frustrated enthusiasts.

*Theatre Group Productions*

Theatre Group Productions, represented by Mr Peter Albery, has been of great help to the Society and in particular in connection with a small sub-committee charged with stimulating the writing of plays suitable for performance in a Christian Theatre.

*Special Meetings*

Two evening meetings were held in London during the year, one an evening for writers of plays at which those who produce and those who write exchanged their views, perhaps sometimes with more liveliness than clarity. But there is no doubt the meeting served a most useful purpose in bringing so many interested people together. Later the Rev. Anthony Bridge gave a lecture on *The Meaning of Art*. His informed and stimulating comments, illustrated by excellent slides, were much appreciated by those present.

A mid-year meeting of the Society was held at which the subject of Sunday performances was discussed. The matter was given a very lively airing, if a somewhat one-sided one. I fear I can only report that though the matter is still being pursued, no satisfactory solution has yet been reached.

*International Conference*

One of the most important events ever undertaken by the Society was the planning of an International Conference which took place at Royaumont, near Paris, in July.

It was a mammoth task to select delegates, lecturers and companies of players from many parts of the world, and to plan the programme in three languages. This was all achieved within the limits of our office space, by the work of Miss Robins and part-time secretarial help. It has brought us into touch with playwrights, theatre directors, leaders of youth organizations, priests, ministers and laymen and women of every Christian Church, all sharing a concern for the communication of the Christian Faith in dramatic terms. Barriers of race or faith were overcome in a truly ecumenical atmosphere and the reality of fellowship was most apparent.

It was encouraging to hear on all sides of the appreciation of the delegates for the generous financial assistance from the Rockefeller Foundation of New York and the Council of Europe, and of the work of Miss Robins and the Society. It was equally encouraging to realize the determination of the delegates that this international work should go on, and that the Religious Drama Society of Great Britain should continue as the central co-ordinating body. Our Chairman, Mr Martin Browne, did not however lead any of the delegates to suppose that the work could be carried on without sacrificial effort, on the part of other Societies than our own, and to this effort delegates seriously pledged themselves.

The Society organized, in association with Sir Henry Lunns, four holiday tours. Three were planned for a visit to Oberammergau and a holiday in the Austrian Tyrol. The fourth was a Festival Tour to see famous plays or pageants in Tegelen, Salzburg, Einsiedeln and Oberammergau. Over sixty people went on these tours, and it seems that they were much appreciated.

*Overseas Ties*

For the third year in succession Mr and Mrs Martin Browne are at Union Theological Seminary, New York, taking a seminar in Religious Drama. Mr Martin Browne's efforts in bringing *The Play of Daniel* to England were greatly appreciated by all those who witnessed it. Perhaps particularly in St Albans Abbey did this medieval masterpiece take its audience near to the heart of the " Mysterium Tremendum " of the Christian Faith.

During the year we have been glad to have the services of Dr John Bachman on our Council, and to have had Professor Tom Driver and Dr Robert Seaver on the staff of the Summer School. We have also been delighted to welcome representatives of many Commonwealth countries both at the Summer School and at other times in the Office.

*Service by Members*

During the year the Council met six times to conduct the business of the Society. In order to lighten the work of the Editor of *Christian Drama*, Mr Raymond Chapman, the Council set up an Editorial Board at the beginning of the year. To the members of this Board, to the members of the Policy and Finance Committee and to those on the Training Committee, as well as to our Councillors, we record our thanks for the willing and able service they have given.

**4. Reports**

(*a*) *Training*

Mr Graham Suter, Chairman of the Training Committee, reported on the year's work. The Committee has met twice, and although much of Miss Robins' time and energy had been spent on the preparations for the International Conference, she had still carried on her normal duties in charge of training. The Summer School at Culham had been organized by Miss Keily, and had been a great success. Mr Suter expressed the Society's gratitude to Miss Keily, and to her Committee for allowing her to undertake this task. The School was attended by 123 students, including nineteen teenagers in a special youth group under the care of Mrs Nutman. This group, present thanks to the generosity of the King George Jubilee Trust, was a most welcome addition to the School, and it was hoped to organize a similar group at the 1961 Summer School. One of the highlights was the experimental work of Mr Martial Rose and his creative drama group; the outstanding lectures were the two given by Professor Tom Driver of Union Theological Seminary, entitled " The Mission of the Church and the Mystery of Drama ".

Mr Suter then told the meeting of future plans. The 1961 Summer School was to be held at St Mary's College, Bangor. The theme would be the Contemporary Christian Theatre, and emphasis would be placed on experimentation and creation. The Training Committee felt that many visitors would like the opportunity of going more thoroughly into specialized aspects of theatre, and it had therefore been decided to organize residential specialized courses each Easter. The first would be held from April 7th to 9th, 1961, at Passfield Hall, London. The subject would be

" Creative Drama " and the principal tutor Stephen Joseph. It was hoped to have a number of students from the Autumn Youth Leaders' Course at this Easter School, and Mr Suter invited interested members to join them.

A new leaflet, giving details of the Summer School, and the Easter Weekend Course, would be obtainable from the office in January, and any publicity members could give would be much appreciated.

In the Autumn of 1961 another weekend course was being planned, probably on Design, and probably held in London. For the Easter and Autumn of 1962, the Training Committee would be glad to have suggestions from members for holding weekend courses outside London. It would be helpful if anyone who could suggest suitable accommodation would also be prepared to act as local publicity officer and work in conjunction with Headquarters in making arrangements, as it was often difficult to do this at a distance, or to know the best way of publicizing courses locally.

The Training Committee were endeavouring to make contact with University students, and also with Theological students. The Committee were concerned to get in touch with clergy of all denominations before they go out into their parishes. Miss Robins was always available to listen to members and advise them, and both she and Mr Suter looked forward to hearing from members on any matter connected with training.

(*b*) *Northern Province*

Miss Keily reported on her work in the Northern Province since October 1959. Miss Keily and Mr Colborn had to work in three dioceses, Miss Keily travelling between Manchester and Sheffield, and Mr Colborn looking after the Durham diocese.

Their productions during the year had included *Birth by Drowning*, the Norman Nicholson play commissioned by the three dioceses, two James Brabazon plays produced by Mr Colborn in Sheffield, and *Christmas in the Market Place* at Rotherham. A production of *The Trial of Jimmy Brown* had been done with the employees of Brown Bayley's Steelworks—the firm where *Go Down Moses* was performed in its early days.

Miss Keily had been invited to lunch with the Archbishop of York and to address his Diocesan Conference.

After Christmas 1959 Mr Colborn had produced a new musical, *Jeremiah*, with a group of Teddy Boys from Tyneside, which caused considerable interest when it was performed in the Gateshead Town Hall. He also took a production of *Prodigal Son* on a small tour. At the same time, Miss Keily produced a double cast of *Way of the Cross* to tour the Manchester area, and a reading of the Crucifixion from *Man Born to be King* as a preliminary to a Five Parish Mission in an area called Newton Heath. Co-operation with representatives of all five parishes in the cast had been striking. The demand for the amateur touring group in *Way of the Cross* was far greater than could be fulfilled, and it seemed to Miss Keily that a good standard of extremely simple, transportable production, might prove really more valuable to the understaffed churches than anything else our limited means could supply. Here once again one was faced with the lack of suitable plays. After Easter Miss Keily was in Sheffield to produce *Birth by Drowning*, while Mr Colborn was in Manchester with *Jeremiah* and two other modest productions. In June Miss Keily went to Mirfield to produce *Noah*, and thence to the Summer School at Culham.

As they both considered that new plays were the biggest universal need, Mr Colborn and Miss Keily were now engaged in testing another experimental script by John Hunter, called *It's Coming to Us All*, designed for use on housing-estates and written in strip-cartoon technique. Mr Colborn was also producing *Birth by Drowning* and Miss Keily endeavouring to present *Showdown* in Sheffield. This pattern would continue until next July, when Mr Colborn would leave to take up work as Drama Director to Coventry Cathedral.

Miss Keily then spoke of the difference between Parish Drama, an enriching experience when reasonably well directed for those taking part, and " theatre " written and produced from a Christian standpoint, where one judges by the standards of artistic experience. She sometimes wondered whether those who produced were always clear before they began just which of these objectives they were out to serve.

(c) *Youth Work*

Mrs Nutman, Youth Adviser, reported on the work that had been done since the last Annual General Meeting. From November 1959 until May 1960 there had been professional tutors working in thirteen clubs, and the four clubs at which Mr Suter tutored in Stevenage succeeded in organizing a small Drama Festival, all the organizing being done by the young people themselves.

The special youth group at Summer School had already been mentioned, and thanks to the kindness of the King George Jubilee Trust it had been possible to give bursaries to the nineteen teenage students. The young people had worked well together, under the tutelage of Martyn Colborn, James Dodding and Mrs Nutman, most of this time working on dance drama. They were from a wide variety of backgrounds and schools, and helped realize one of the Society's aims, to integrate young people into adult society.

It had been decided that sending professional tutors to individual clubs, whilst greatly appreciated, was not the most economical way of using the available funds. It was therefore decided to experiment with a Youth Leaders' Training Course, and with a minimum of publicity twenty-four students had enrolled for the course, to be held on twelve consecutive Friday evenings. Most students came from youth clubs, but their backgrounds and ages varied considerably. The tutors were James Dodding and Graham Suter, with lectures on special subjects by various experts. This was to be followed by a meeting half-way between Christmas and Easter, which it was hoped would be attended by the Youth Course students, the young people from Summer School, and any members of the Society interested in this work.

Mrs Nutman said that some of the things achieved during the year had been that the Society now had a number of young people, both individual and groups, belonging to it as junior members; valuable contacts had been made with other youth organizations, the Girl Guide Association, The Methodist Youth Dept., National Association of Boys' and Mixed Clubs, the Salvation Army, and the L.C.C. All these organizations had been most encouraging and given generous publicity to the Society's work. The Training Committee were aware of the justifiable criticism that all this youth work went on in and near London, but if it was financially possible to extend this work, it was hoped to be able to do much more in other parts of the country during the coming year.

**5. Elections**

As there had been only one nomination for each office, the Chairman declared the following elected unopposed:

*Chairman of the Society:* E. Martin Browne, Esq.
*Honorary Treasurer:* J. H. L. Trustram, Esq.
*Auditors:* Messrs. Ridley, Heslop & Sainer

The election for the Council was then held, the following twenty-seven being nominated for twenty places:

*Peter Albery, Esq.
*Rev. Ronald Ayre
*Miss K. Bainbridge-Bell
*Mrs K. M. Baxter
James Brabazon, Esq.
*Rev. Anthony Bridge
*Rev. P. Bullock-Flint
Edgar Chaplin, Esq.
*Raymond Chapman, Esq.
*Rev. A. E. Cordell
Miss Heather Craig
*James Roose Evans, Esq.
Miss Patience Fetherston
*James Forsyth, Esq.
*Rev. F. Glendenning
Dennis Harrison, Esq.
*Miss K. Hudson
Rev. David Jones
*Laurence King, Esq.
Donald Mackay, Esq.
*Miss F. Mackenzie
Miss S. M. Pearce
*Miss H. Raeburn
Rev. Vernon Sproxton
*Graham Suter, Esq.
*Rev. P. W. Turner
*David William, Esq.

An asterisk denotes a retiring member who was nominated for re-election.

Tellers were appointed and whilst they were counting the votes the meeting proceeded with the business.

**6. International Conference**

The National Adviser reported on the International Conference held at Royaumont, near Paris, in July 1960. This had been a successor to the conference held at Oxford in 1955, and its purpose was to carry on the exchange of ideas begun there. The theme was " Contemporary Christian Drama " and fifty delegates from twenty countries attended, very ably chaired by the Society's own Chairman, Mr Martin Browne, assisted by Mr Robert Speaight. There were three lectures, the Rev. Père Jean Mambrino on " Christian Drama in the Theatre " Mr Tuve Nyström on the unique form of Liturgical Drama in Sweden, and Professor Tom Driver on " The Church, the Theatre and the World " (printed in the Winter, 1960 issue of *Christian Drama*).

Miss Robins said that one of the most gratifying aspects of the Conference was that it had achieved an Ecumenical gathering of all denominations, who worshipped together, lived together and discussed together for five days, in an atmosphere of fellowship and unity. It was a heartening reward for the two years of planning and preparation that preceded the Conference. No other country had a national Religious Drama Society—and it was a long, slow task to get in touch with prospective delegates all over the world, and to find out suitable people and theatrical companies to invite to Royaumont. Miss Robins paid tribute to the preliminary spadework undertaken on a Rockefeller subsidy by Miss Joan Ford. Eight companies were invited, and presented a diversity of Christian plays during the evenings. The company chosen from Great Britain was the Southwark Cathedral Drama Group. Under the direction of Ursula Nicholl they presented *Christ in the Concrete City*. Generally the level of lectures and discussions was higher than the level of the plays, although two of the most interesting were the Liturgical Drama from Sweden, and the ten-minute contemporary play which won a competition at Union Theological Seminary, New York.

At the closing session Mr Martin Browne made it clear to delegates that the Conference had been made possible financially by the generosity of the Rockefeller Foundation of New York and the Council for Europe, and practically by the work of the R.D.S. staff, but that future progress could not be maintained unless other countries were prepared to shoulder some of the burden of it themselves. This resulted in delegates from three countries offering their services to maintain an exchange of ideas and information between various countries, the R.D.S./G.B. to remain the central co-ordinating body. A unanimous decision was then made that all delegates should become members of the Society, and at the time of the Annual General Meeting about thirty had already done so. Delegates were anxious to try to start Religious Drama organizations in their own countries, determined that there must be meetings on an international level not less than every five years, and that funds must be found to make this possible. Mr Robert Seaver had suggested that a small international committee might be set up under the guidance of R.D.S./G.B., to plan study programmes for the next conference. It was hoped that this might prove possible. Miss Robins said that in reviewing the Conference she thought it was one of the most valuable pieces of work the Society had undertaken during the time she had been associated with it. There was no doubt that Great Britain was considerably ahead of many countries in its whole conception of Christian Drama. Miss Robins believed that, if the Society so wished, this international work could have far-reaching results for the work of Christian Drama throughout the world, as well as for the R.D.S. itself.

The meeting then adjourned for lunch, resuming business again at 1.45 p.m.

**7. Consideration of the Accounts**

Mr J. H. L. Trustram, the Honorary Treasurer, presented the year's Accounts, a statement of which appeared at the end of the Annual Report which had been circulated to the meeting. Mr Trustram then expressed thankfulness that the Society had been able to stem the downward trend, and not only remove the deficit of £800, but had a small surplus of income over expenditure. This was due to two factors: the response of a few members to the appeals for donations, and a small increase in membership; and to drastic cuts in the office staff, and the streamlining of the office work generally. Mr Trustram said that whilst the Society should be thankful for this position, he did feel it had only been achieved at the expense of the work the

Society ought to be doing. It was most important that the office should be adequately staffed and that the staff should be adequately paid; he did not feel happy on either of these points. Unless the Society could achieve an assured increased income it would be unable to do a quarter of the things it ought to do, and only perhaps 1 per cent of the things it could do.

Mr Trustram pointed out that the increase in the amount of subscriptions for the year was £150 over the previous year, which he thought was disappointing. For a society which represents Religious Drama in the whole of Great Britain to have a membership of only 2,000 seems a very small percentage of the people who would be willing to help the work of the Society, if it were better known. Mr Trustram appealed to all members to keep up their efforts to interest others in the work of the Society, and obtain their support for it. The Society was grateful to S.P.C.K., the King George Jubilee Trust and the Rockefeller Foundation for the generous grants they had made, some of which it was hoped would continue in the future. The Rockefeller grant was a tapering one, which would expire completely in 1962; it had been given to the Society in the first place in order to help itself. Mr Trustram emphasized the need for the Society to make up the amount it would be losing from the Rockefeller grant if it wished to avoid further drastic cuts in its work.

The figure for royalties and performing fees—£804—was due to the great success of one or two particular plays in the United States, but was not a situation which was likely to be repeated in future years.

Mr Trustram drew members' attention to the item under expenditure on rent, and said that whilst at the moment this was reasonable, the lease expires in three years, and if present trends continued it was extremely unlikely that this would be renewed on similar terms. Postage was a heavy item, and members could help here by enclosing a stamped addressed envelope when they wrote to the office for help or advice. Mr Trustram also asked members if they could settle Library accounts promptly, as some were as much as two years overdue, and no business could afford to give credit to this extent.

The International Conference did not appear on the Society's statement of accounts, as this was of course paid for entirely from the Rockefeller Grant.

Mr Trustram continued that he did not think it would be out of place, at this juncture, to mention publicity. He would like to be able to include in the Society's budget a substantial sum for getting the Society more widely known, and engaging the services of a press agent who would ensure that the Society's activities were reported in the National press. If someone gave a donation of £500, this could be done for six months, but Mr Trustram said it must be realized that that was the sort of sum required. The only way of getting the Society known when we had no funds for publicity was by the efforts of members, talking to people about it, and encouraging others to join it.

Mr Trustram concluded by expressing the Society's appreciation of the work done throughout the year by the National Secretary and the rest of the staff.

*Moved* by Mr R. H. Ward

*Seconded* by Miss F. Collins

*That the accounts be accepted.*

*Carried.*

The Chairman then explained to the meeting that for the first time the Annual Report and Accounts had been printed; she hoped it would be possible to enlist members' active help in addressing envelopes and sending these out, with a covering letter, to as many people as possible who might be interested in the Society and its work. The office could not undertake the large amount of clerical work involved, but if any members who could spare time to address envelopes and insert the letters would let Mr Hogben or Mrs Flanagan know, such help would be most gratefully received.

Mrs Baxter then introduced the dramatic duologue written by R. H. Ward, given by Pamela Keily and Martyn Colborn, an amusing and pertinent comment upon the problems before those who had the audacity to attempt religious drama. The two actors and the author were warmly applauded.

# GENERAL FUNDS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th JUNE 1960

| | £ s. d. | £ s. d. | £ s. d. |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Accumulated Deficit at July 1st, 1959** ... ... ... | | | 861 8 0 |
| **Expenditure during the year ended June 30th, 1960:—** | | | |
| Rent, Rates and Insurance ... | 322 16 5 | | |
| Light and Heat ... ... | 29 12 3 | | |
| Repairs and Renewals ... ... | 83 4 6 | | |
| Salaries and National Insurance ... ... | 1,682 12 1 | | |
| Postage and Telephone... ... | 318 10 11 | | |
| Printing and Stationery ... | 294 12 6 | | |
| Accountants Charges ... ... | 89 5 0 | | |
| Sundry Expenses ... ... | 195 19 1 | | |
| | | 3,016 12 9 | |
| Advisers' and Tutors' Expenses | | 88 18 9 | |
| Expenses of Annual General and Council Meetings ... | | 77 0 11 | |
| Amounts Written Off:— | | | |
| Lease of Office ... ... | 39 0 0 | | |
| Furniture and Fittings ... | 10 12 0 | | |
| Library Books and Plays ... | 38 1 9 | | |
| | | 87 13 9 | |
| Cost of Production of *Christian Drama* ... ... | | 280 8 1 | |
| | | | 3,550 14 3 |
| **Accumulated Surplus at June 30th, 1960** ... ... | | | 232 13 7 |
| | | | £4,644 15 10 |

| **Income for the year ended June 30th, 1960** | £ s. d. |
|---|---|
| Subscriptions and Donations ... ... ... | 2,034 13 7 |
| Grant S.P.C.K. ... ... ... ... ... | 1,500 0 0 |
| Library Fees and Fines ... ... ... | 96 8 2 |
| Royalties and Performing Fees ... ... ... | 804 3 7 |
| Producers and Lecturers Fees ... ... ... | 94 5 11 |
| Miscellaneous Receipts ... ... ... ... | 1 11 3 |
| Summer and Weekend Schools:— Excess of Receipts over Expenditure ... ... | 24 17 7 |
| Bank Deposit Interest ... ... ... ... | 5 8 8 |
| Profit on Sale of Publications ... ... ... | 83 7 1 |
| | £4,644 15 10 |

We have examined the above Statement of Account of the General Fund of the Society for the year ended June 30th, 1960 and we are of opinion according to the best of our information and the explanations given to us that it gives a true and fair view of the state of the Fund at June 30th, 1960 and of the Income and Expenditure for the year ended on that date.

10 *New Court, Lincoln's Inn, London, W.C.* 2.
*October* 21*st*, 1960.

RIDLEY, HESLOP & SAINER,
*Chartered Accountants.*

**Results of the Elections were then announced, as follows:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Peter Albery, Esq. | Rev. F. Glendenning |
| Rev. R. Ayres | Miss K. Hudson |
| Miss K. Bainbridge-Bell | Laurence King, Esq. |
| Mrs K. M. Baxter | Miss Frances MacKenzie |
| James Brabazon, Esq. | Miss S. M. Pearce |
| Rev. P. Bullock-Flint | Miss H. Raeburn |
| Raymond Chapman, Esq. | Rev. Vernon Sproxton |
| Rev. A. E. Cordell | Graham Suter, Esq. |
| James Roose Evans, Esq. | Rev. P. W. Turner |
| James Forsyth, Esq. | David William, Esq. |

*Moved* by Miss Margaret Smith
*Seconded* by Miss Mary Hichens
*That the voting papers be destroyed.*
*Carried.*

**9. Any Other Business**

(*a*) *Meetings in London*

The Chairman reported that at the last Council Meeting the National Secretary had explained that the three meetings for members during the year had been held at a loss, the amount taken from those attending being insufficient to cover the cost, in spite of the fact that no fee had been paid to lecturers. The Council had therefore decided to refer this question to the A.G.M., and to try and find out whether these meetings should be continued, and if so what the financial arrangements should be. Considerable discussion followed, and it was agreed that meetings held in order to discuss matters of vital interest to the Society, as a preliminary towards taking any considered corporate action, were essential and could not be dispensed with. Several suggestions were made to try and avoid losses on members' meetings, which it was agreed the Society could not afford. Some members thought it might be possible to organize informal evenings in private homes, and it was also suggested that instead of having to hire rooms the Society might be able to arrange for groups of members to attend free public lectures at various galleries and museums. Mrs Nutman said she felt that there was a great deal of scope for individual members in various areas to organize, as a voluntary service to the Society, visits and informal evenings, which were an excellent way of members meeting each other. The office could always supply names and addresses of members in various areas.

(*b*) *Resolutions from Bristol Branch*

Mr Collinson presented two resolutions passed at Bristol, Gloucester and Somerset Branch A.G.M., which were as follows:

(1) That a company of young actors be put on the road to tour schools with a repertoire of plays, secular and religious, as some countries are already doing.

Mr Collinson said that many small companies were touring schools giving performances, and his Branch had felt this might be a good way for the Society to raise funds, and to bring it to the notice of a wider public. Mrs Nutman told the meeting she had recently attended a meeting organized by the British Drama League on Children's Theatre, and had met representatives from all over the country who were running touring companies for children. Nearly all of them were in a very poor financial state and only able to pay their actors the lowest Equity rates.

The National Secretary recalled that when the Society had the New Pilgrim Players on the road, travelling with the minimum of scenery and props, and paying the lowest Equity rates, the running costs had still been £120 a week, on top of which the 'bus had to be paid for and money found to mount each new production. Since then, costs had gone up considerably. Miss Keily added that it was not only a question of having enough money to meet your weekly costs, it was also necessary to have a large capital sum behind a venture of this kind, which the Society most certainly could not provide.

Considerable discussion followed; several teachers pointed out that it was not possible in every school to include these extra-curricular activities, and there might

be considerable difficulty in arranging sufficient bookings for a company. M Colborn spoke feelingly from experience of the fatigues and frustrations of this kin of life for the actors. Mr R. H. Ward said that he had lectured to large voluntar audiences of school children on the theatre, producing a play, etc., and had foun them very enthusiastic. He did feel, however, that there were already too many o these small touring companies, and what was really needed from a body like th R.D.S. was support for the permanent theatres which were trying to encourag youngsters to become part of their regular theatre audience, and to get these theatre to put on plays which are " religious dramas ". Mr Collinson said he was gratefu to the meeting for having discussed the matter so fully, and felt sure the Branc would be satisfied to hear the explanation of the financial situation and the man points raised, from which it was clear that this was not, at the present juncture, practical proposition.

(2) That plays obtainable only in MS from the Library, and recommended t members by the Society, should be duplicated in larger numbers in order t afford complete acting sets for those requiring them; and that to ensure th the waxed skins should be kept; and that some of these sets should be lent fo reading only, to be retained by the borrower not longer than two weeks.

The National Secretary explained the problems involved in the question c typescripts. The two main ones were money and staff time. The office did no even have uninterrupted time to spare to do this task. The Society also had to bea in mind, of course, that only one person might ask for a set of a typescript play, an then only have one reading and return it. It was therefore quite uneconomic t make sets which would never be used. There were three ways in which copies c typescript plays were obtained for the Library. They were:

*from the author* who might spare two or three, or occasionally an almost fu acting set, from his own stock. On only one occasion has an author been ab to give the Society a set of stencils.

*from the producer of the original production*—usually a set left over after th production, rather the worse for wear. Occasionally the group is able to ru us off a set from their stencils, sometimes for a small fee, sometimes free.

*from an agent*—after a good deal of effort, one copy.

The matter was discussed and it was generally agreed that the Library could no bear the expense of getting full sets made of all plays, but that it should be mad clear to members when recommending plays what the situation is with regard copies, and the individual group could then decide whether they wished to go to th expense of having copies made for their own use. The Library would endeavour keep the copies and sets of typescripts as neat and well protected as possible an covers were being put on all of them to facilitate this. Members too, were aske to try and keep typescripts as clean and orderly as they could when borrowing ther Mr Collinson thanked the meeting and added his own suggestion that groups migh consider, when giving the Library production sets of plays, also giving the sten skins, so that the Society could have further copies made if it wished.

(*c*) *Christian Drama*

The Rev. P. W. Turner said that during the year the editorial arrangement f *Christian Drama* had been changed, and it was now being edited on a purely volu tary basis by Mr Raymond Chapman. Mr Turner expressed the Society's ve sincere thanks to Mr Chapman for undertaking this labour of love and maintainin the journal's high standard. This was warmly supported by the meeting.

Before the formal business of the meeting concluded, the Rev. Ronald Ayl expressed the Society's thanks, not only for the chairmanship of the A.G.M., b for the chairing of the Council Meetings during the year, undertaken so ably a patiently by Mrs Baxter, and her continuing invaluable service to the Society. T meeting warmly applauded this appreciation.

The formal business of the day being concluded, the afternoon ended with recital by Sylvia Read and William Fry of *The Celestial Omnibus* by E. M. Forst this being an extract from *The Beast and the Angel*, a programme of Theatre Gro Productions, under the direction of John Downing. The recital was greatly enjoy and was followed by a buffet tea.

Published for

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by **S.P.C.K.**

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